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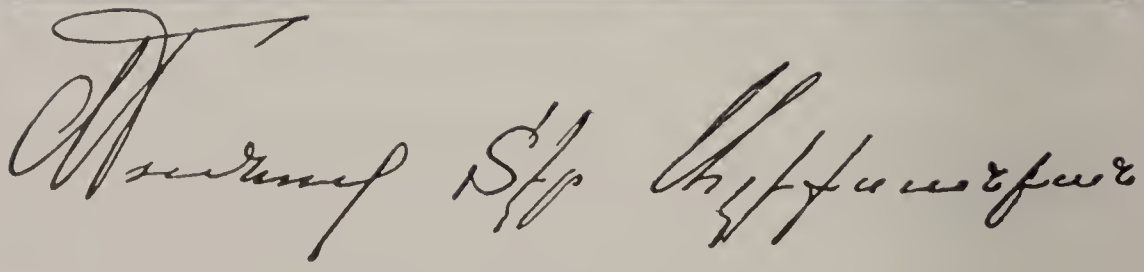

MANOOG DER ALEXANIAN.

WHEN I WAS A BOY IN ARMENIA

By

MANOOG DER ALEXANIAN

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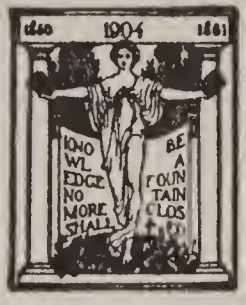

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When I Was a Boy In Armenia

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This book is modestly dedicated to my great Alma Mater,

HARVARD,

who guided me gently by the hand through the field of Good Knowledge; and carefully directed me to the sources of

LIGHT, WISDOM, and TRUTH,

and gave me New Life

PREFACE

"When I Was a Boy In Armenia" is a plain, sincere, and unvarnished history of my life in my native land. I unfold it before the reader, like a panorama, with its dark and its bright colors. I have been careful not to omit any event or incident in my boyhood that may be of interest to my readers. I have described my childhood experiences somewhat in detail, because they are typical of the life of many Armenian boys of my generation.

With great pleasure I express my gratitude to my friend, Assistant Dean Bacon of Harvard College, for his valuable criticism and advice.

I hope that the reader will find this book interesting and instructive.

MANOOG DER ALEXANIAN.

Cambridge, Mass.,
January, 1926.

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WHEN I WAS A BOY IN ARMENIA

CHAPTER I

MY BIRTHDAY AND NAME

I WAS born on the anniversary of the day when forty young men chose willingly to freeze to death in an icy pool for the sake of Christianity. This may seem preposterous to the minds of some modern young men, who are burning with the passion of practical, palpable comforts of the flesh, or, in other words, love the luxuries of life, yet, as a matter of fact, it was not only highly possible but an actual occurrence even after the days when Christianity was young, in not so remote a past as the seventeenth century when young men and boys preferred the spiritual comforts and pleasures to worldly luxuries.

The story of the "Forty Heroic Young Martyrs" concerns forty young Armenians who accepted Christianity. The heathen dignitaries, learning of this, arrested them and, in order to terrify, took them to an icy pool near a bath-house, there telling them, "Either you turn to paganism and enjoy the warmth and comfort of the bath-house, or be stripped of your clothes and thrown into the icy pool." These forty young men, who were burning with the "passion of spiritual comforts" and the "love of Christ" chose the icy pool to the warm bath-house. Upon the defiance and disobedience of these forty young men, the indignant pagans stripped off their clothes, and tying them together with a rope, threw them into the icy pool, where all of them froze to death. Their sacrifice for that indomitable faith in Christ!

The day on which these forty young martyrs met their death is kept holy by the Armenian church in commemoration

of their sacrifice, and called *Karassoon Manoog,* which means "forty young men."

Having been born on this day, I was named Manoog, which means "young." My middle name is Der, which means Sir or Reverend; my surname is Alexanian. All Armenian surnames end in *ian,* which means "belonging to." For example, Alexanian means "belonging to the Alexan family." The ending *ian* is the earmark of all Armenian surnames.

CHAPTER II

MY TRAGIC CHILDHOOD

PALOU, my native city, in Greater Armenia, is built on the brink of the Mountain of Saint Mesrob. This mountain is so named because, according to our tradition, it was here that Saint Mesrob, a learned Armenian priest in the fourth century A. D. secluded himself, and after "long study and prayers" invented the seven vowels of the Armenian alphabet. Adding twenty-nine consonants (borrowed from the Greek and Assyrian languages) gave the Armenians their alphabet, which contains now thirty-six letters.

Up to this time, about 450 A. D., Armenians spoke a kind of Armenian language, yet did not have their own alphabet. After the discovery of the alphabet, the Bible was translated from the Greek

original into Armenian by this same man, who was, by the way, also a learned scholar in Greek and Latin of the great Alexandrian School, at Alexandria, Egypt—a colossal center of learning at the time. So for the first time, the existing Armenian language was reduced to writing. By the invention of the Armenian alphabet, a great many difficulties and inconveniences were removed, and the Armenian national pride elevated. For this reason, Armenians hold Saint Mesrob's memory sacred in their hearts, and rightly revere him as a saint.

Furthermore, my native city, Palou, was founded in a very curious and strange way. The place where the city stands today was once thickly covered with tufted cherry-trees (*pal* meaning " cherry ") offering a place of refuge to highwaymen and robbers, and in time it became very dangerous for travelers, situated as it was on the main road between two cities. A group of armed Armenians bravely at-

tacked this shelter of thieves, and after a hard fight cleaned the place from its undesirables. Then, establishing themselves there with their families, relatives, and friends, they laid the foundation of the city of Palou, which is noted for its commanding location.

In the fall of 1895 the Sultan of Turkey, called " The Great Assassin " by that noted English statesman of the nineteenth century, Gladstone, sent sealed orders to the governors and mayors in the section of my native city to arm all the Turkish inhabitants with the intent to kill and rob. Armenians, as the only Christians living there, were made the special object of this vicious attack. Some of them, however, knew of this secret order, and believing in its certainty, were prepared to defend themselves to the best of their ability. Having been forbidden to buy, keep, or carry arms of any sort, it was rather difficult for them to meet the Turks on even ground.

A Typical Armenian Village.

The attack came suddenly in October of that year, without warning or fair chance. Many Armenians did not know anything about the secret order; some of them did not even believe in its certainty and so were taken by surprise in their stores and killed unawares. Those, however, who escaped did the best they could under existing circumstances, by defending themselves from their flat housetops and hastily built stone walls.

Just an hour before the attack, my father was feeding me bread and milk from a bowl. I did not know that this was his last meal! We heard firing of guns. My father took me quickly in his arms, and leaving the food on the table, rushed with me into the house. He ran with me through an opening made in the wall of sun-baked mud bricks, into our neighbor's house, where he met other armed Armenians holding a conference. After speaking with them for a moment, he left the room and climbed the stairs to

the top of the house. Just as he reached the roof of the house, a shower of bullets greeted him. He withdrew and waited. The shower of bullets ceased. He made another attempt; again he was held back by flying bullets. In a third attempt, however, he safely crossed over to the next roof. Here he jumped into a courtyard and, climbing some wooden stairs, all the while holding me and his gun tightly in his arms, he entered a large room where he found many women and children huddled together in fright. He had come here to protect them from the Turks, for the Turks have no chivalry and will lay hands even on women and children.

As I was told when I grew up, each strong and able-bodied man was assigned a post to guard the women and children stationed at certain places, while others formed in groups to repulse the attack of the Turks. My father quieted the fear-stricken women and children, assuring them that he would defend them by fight-

ing to the last drop of his blood and the limit of his strength.

And he did. A little time had passed when a group of Turks, armed to the teeth, came rushing over the flat house-tops with swords and rifles in their hands, firing and shouting yells of death and terror. They climbed the stairs to the room where we were. While they were on their way, my father quickly jumped up from his seat, took me in his arms, kissed me and said, "Good-bye, my little child, I leave you to the care of God; I know He will be good to you, and take care of you." Then swiftly grasping his revolver, he stood by the door, ready for action.

I still remember those kindly and affectionate large brown eyes, his healthy cheeks, his blond moustache. His farewell is still ringing in my ears. I could not understand, and thought he was but going away for a short while. Scarcely was he up and standing when the Turks began to pound at the door from outside and

broke it open. My father was the only man to meet them. I still see, as if in a dream, the huge, black Turk, his big, black pupils distended until the whites of his eyes showed, as he first flashed his long sword, and my father took off his hat quickly and caught the sword with his left hand, pulling it away from the Turk, and thrusting it back at him.

Soon firing began from both sides. My father fired his gun, swung his sword right and left, and pushed the Turks back. While the fight was going on, there came another group of armed Turks who fell upon my father, and soon he was in the thick of the fray. Firing and shouting increased. I saw many Turks drop to the floor, their eyes rolling in death-like agony, and lay prostrate before my eyes.

When last I saw my father, his left arm was dangling from his shoulder, almost amputated. But he fought on single-handed with his revolver. He made a final and gallant thrust, his body riddled with

bullets. Then, exhausted, he fell to the ground, saying, "Cowards! I'll get you yet. Don't dare touch the women and children!" With these words on his lips, he passed away, a hero.

Can you picture the scene in that room? Women crying for help and mercy, the Turks among them now, robbing and killing those who resisted. I saw many women grappling the Turks by the throat and fighting them with their hands and teeth. I can still hear the noise of the guns—bing-bang, bing-bang—can still see the women falling on the ground with bullets in their bodies; others being mangled now on my left, now on my right.

And in all this horrible tumult, I was saved as by a miracle. I could not understand what it was all about, and why. I ran outside the door to see if I could find my father. While I was outside, a short, thick-set Turk with heavy black beard and moustache came towards me. I did not

like his eyes; they were very wild and cruel! He lifted me with his left hand, and with his right, started to plunge a curved knife into my stomach! I did not know what he was about to do; I did not yet know what fear was. Just as he was about to stab me, a tall Turk came running up and hit him on the back, making a motion with his hands, which I suppose meant to hurry. My captor dropped me on the floor and ran. Hardly had these men gone when came a group of armed Armenians who were on the trail of these barbarians. Women robbed of their jewels and clothing told them the direction they went, and the Armenians hurried after them. Soon after the butchering and the noise of the rifles had subsided, I found myself alone, and then began to cry for my father. A kindly Armenian woman took me in her arms and carried me with her—she was our neighbor's wife, as I was told later. How I wish now that I had been old enough to

fight side by side with my father against those brutal Turks!

The next day those Armenians who had survived came together. All their foodstuffs and clothing and household goods had been plundered and taken away to the Turkish village.

A few weeks later, a telegram came from my aunt. She resided in Adana, Cilicia, in Lesser Armenia—where no such things occurred; " The Great Assassin's " policy was to attack different parts of the country at different times. I was brought into Adana in care of my niece, following a journey of thirty days by caravan. During this journey, I was carried in a square box topped with sunshades of equal weight which balanced my position on the saddle.

In Adana I first became conscious of my surroundings, of the world around me. It was here that I began school and passed my childhood and boyhood.

CHAPTER III

MY SCHOOL DAYS

ADANA is the capital of Cilicia, and its largest city, built on broad, level ground, and with a climate distinctly Californian. Adana has many fertile fields of cotton and wheat, and is surrounded with beautiful gardens. An hour's ride on horseback from the city, stretch the beautiful vineyards with all kinds of fruit-trees. My home town, Adana, is two hours by train from the Mediterranean Sea, and one hour from Tarsus, where the first Christian church was built by the Apostle Paul. This church still stands to-day as it was built almost nineteen hundred years ago, with only a few repairs. Armenians still worship in this church.

Armenian schools are maintained at great cost and against many obstacles. Love of learning is a marked characteristic

of our people. At that time we had a national school system, taxing our people for the maintenance of education, whose headquarters was located in Constantinople, under the name of The Union of Armenian Schools. This organization provided for a network of schools all over Armenia, closely connected with and largely supported by the Armenian church. Our elementary schools were free, but higher education was paid for, in part, by the students.

When I was six years old, I entered the kindergarten (*mangabardez*) in the Armenian churchyard. Here I learned the Armenian alphabet on a slate. As I became a little older, I entered the Grammar School (*dzaghgots*). I then learned how to read and write Armenian, ciphering, history, and church catechism. When I became ten years old, I went to High School (*Partzrakouyn Varjaran*). Here I learned drawing, composition, geography, music, etc. Incidentally, I want to

mention the fact that when I was being transferred to the High School, the principal raised the objection that I was too young for admission, but my teacher, placing his hand on my head, caressed me and said to the principal, "Although he is young, he is first in the class, and very good in his lessons."

Our school was open to all the Armenian boys in town. It was a three-story stone building, with a large playground, where the gymnasium was to be found. We had no indoor gymnasiums as you have here in America. In order to reach the class-room we had to climb the stone steps. Our school was void of any decorations. It contained only the students' seats and the teacher's desk. As you entered the school from the main entrance, the first thing you noticed directly in front of you was the teacher's desk.

I can still see our serious-faced teacher bending over his desk on a high platform and busily engaged in his work. On the

right side of his desk lay three sticks, and a hand-bell. He was a person of rather severe discipline, and always kept two or three good switches on hand, which the pupils supplied. We all competed with one another to have the honor of bringing the best stick and keeping the teacher well supplied, for we fondly hoped that the teacher would spare us for our service. On the contrary, however, the one who brought the stick usually got the first taste of it!

One day my teacher asked me to bring in a good, fresh stick from our vineyard. I knew what was coming, so I answered, "Sir, I am sorry, I cannot bring you any more sticks, because each time I brought one I was the first to feel it." I can still see the gentle twist at the right corner of his mouth and his suppressed smile, as he made answer, "Alexanian, you have always a stone ready in your mouth," which meant "you are always ready to give quick, witty, and clever answers." As a

boy, I was well known in the school, at home, and in my neighborhood as a "witty boy," and well liked for it.

One day in our vineyard we had a lady visitor who wished to go home at eleven o'clock at night. I was asked to take the lady on horseback to her vineyard, which was three hours distant from ours. I jumped on the horse, and with the lady behind me, took her home. It was one o'clock in the morning when I reached her place, and turned the horse's head towards home. The night was very dark, and I did not know the road. The night guards of the vineyard were blowing their whistles, which terrified me still more. In a moment I got on the road and dropped the reins of the horse, and then, the horse brought me back to our vineyard safely! When I arrived, my folks took me down from the horse, kissed me and praised me for being so clever and brave, but my answer was, "Give the credit to the horse; he was the one to find the road, not

I." I was very much praised for this answer.

Each morning we began our school with a prayer. All students joined in the chorus and sang " Our God, All-merciful, Omniscient." After the prayer, we had our morning classes. The teacher read loudly from the book and we repeated after him in a loud voice. Sometimes he asked us questions which we had to answer from memory. We had our recesses and left school early in the afternoon for home. We had no grading. The smartest pupil sat at the head of the class, and he was followed by the next best. There was lively competition among us to be at the head of the class, for that, of course, was a great honor.

When any one of the pupils did not behave well in class-room or in play, he was punished severely by the teacher. Almost every pupil has felt the force of one of those sticks on the palm of his hand during some time of his school days. We

were very much afraid of our teacher, for, with the consent of our parents, he had absolute control over his pupils. In a way, he virtually owned us.

I remember once hearing a mother with her boy (a truant who used to run away from school) tell the teacher: "Here is my boy; his flesh is yours, his bones mine, do as you wish with him to keep him at school!" Which meant that the teacher could whip him as much as he wanted if he ran away again from school.

In the school we had a man called *dendes,* a kind of truant officer. When a pupil was absent from school this *dendes* went after him. As there were no street-cars or taxis, the school officer would sling the boy over his back and carry him back to school, where he generally got a whipping from the teacher. I always liked to go to school and was never absent.

I was, however, very lively and sanguine in play, and on account of this, used to have many fights with the boys. I remem-

ber having a good many welts on my palm. Besides the stick, another punishment in the school was to stand up on one foot for an hour—usually with another pupil watching you to see that you kept your foot up in the air. Still another punishment was to hold a large volume of the Holy Bible in your hands for an hour. Again, many of us knew the tedium of being kept after school hours in the evening, and copy from 100 to 500 lines from a book. This discipline produced many good penmen. The punishment that the boys disliked most of all was to have their faces blackened with charcoal and stand at the door of the school, to be looked at by all the pupils.

The Turkish government did not allow our teacher to teach Armenian history in the schools. If a teacher was caught with a book on Armenian history, seen or related of as teaching Armenian history, he was imprisoned for life. Against this, our teacher forbade us to speak Turkish in

class-room or play; there was a secret-service pupil who reported any one speaking Turkish. Those who were reported had to pay a penny each time they were caught. The money thus collected was used in buying paper and pens for needy students.

After school in the evening we used to go home in groups. All the pupils living on the same street or neighborhood formed a separate squad and marched home in rows of fours under the guidance of a leader. On our way home, no one was allowed to speak or make noise. We had to behave well. Those who did not were reported to the teacher the next day, and the one reported duly received his punishment. Usually the pupil who misbehaved in the squad did not appear the next morning for fear of punishment; and then he was not safe, because the truant officer would be after him and bring him back to school, where he received double punishment. When our squad reached its

A Group of Armenian Pupils.

neighborhood, it was disbanded, and each pupil went merrily to his home.

In Armenia, girls' and boys' schools are separate. Boys do not mix with girls of their age, either in school or in play. There was no school on Saturdays. Every Saturday being a house-cleaning day for the Armenian homes, we boys ran errands for our parents and then were free to play. On Sunday afternoons after church, the boys in the neighborhood came together to go off swimming and playing outside the city in the gardens and vineyards.

One Sunday afternoon, with some school chums, I went to the gardens to play. When we were returning, we met another group of school chums, who asked us to join them. I told them we were going home to supper.

"We have lunch with us," answered one of the boys in the other group; "if you join us, you can share our lunch."

"All right," said I, and anxious to play

a little longer, we crossed the river to an island. While we were playing on this island, one of the boys, who happened to be the son of our teacher, fell into the river on becoming top-heavy trying to dip his head into the water. I rushed after him, throwing out my long belt to him so he could hold on and I could pull him out, but he was unconscious and could not help himself. Then I took off my clothes, for I was a good swimmer, and jumped into the river. It was a very deep and dangerous place; the current tossed me about. I was near to getting drowned myself but I kept after him until a big current tossed me to the shore and carried the little boy away. We ran to the countryside for help; older swimmers jumped into the water but could not find him. After three days, his body was discovered by divers under the bridge of the River Sihoon.

Poor boy, I felt very sorry for him, but it was his fault and we could not help it; as the boys told me, he would not listen to

them, and by going too far into the river, he lost his life. Ever since I have been especially careful in swimming.

Thus I lived the first half of my boyhood in Adana, working in school and playing outside of school hours. How I wish I could go back to those golden days of my boyhood! But they are gone; gone forever!

CHAPTER IV

MY LIFE AND EDUCATION IN A MONASTERY

When I was about twelve years old, I had a great desire for the Armenian priesthood. I was very much impressed by the strong and magnetic personality, and inspired by the ability and leadership of the bishop of our home town. Hence a strong desire to follow his example was awakened in me. My relatives advised me against it, but their advice could not swerve me from my determination. One day, upon my consistent request, my cousin took me to the Armenian bishop and told him about my desire to go to the monastery and study for the priesthood. When we were in his presence I bowed, kissed his hand, and stood six paces away from him.

The bishop said, "This Sunday I am going to give a sermon; if you can repeat

this sermon verbatim Monday morning, I will see that you enter the monastery."

Sunday, as usual, I was in the church attentively listening to his sermon. After church I played all the afternoon, and on Monday morning I repeated his sermon word for word in his presence and that of his colleagues.

The bishop's comment was, "Very good, my boy; I feel that you will be a great man some day." Upon this, he made the arrangements for my entrance into the monastery. In September I was sent to the monastery schools at Sis, the capital of our old Armenian kingdom in Cilicia. Sis is a great reminder of our glorious past, with its old and war-scarred castles, its buried treasures, its ruins of magnificent churches.

The monastery was built on the side of a huge mountain, called the Mountain of Leon. Leon VI was our last king in Cilicia, Lesser Armenia. He died in Paris, and was buried in the church of St.

Denis, Paris, France. His sepulcher still stands there to-day. The mountain is named after him because his castles were built on the top of this mountain, and these castles still stand to-day as a reminder of his brave battles. Many a time have I climbed on top of them, where I enjoyed a view overlooking the Taurus Mountains of the beautiful landscape of Cilicia.

The monastery occupied about fifty acres of land, with a tall and thick wall encircling it, and two doors—a large one on the east, and a small on the west side. These doors were kept open during the day, and locked every night at six o'clock. Within the walls of the monastery stood the headquarters of the Cathoghigos, the cells of the monks, the church, a bath-house, a fountain, a well, a garden, a vine-yard, a school, and a large stable in which we had many good Arabian stallions. Our monastery had a very commanding location overlooking the beautiful pano-rama of the city and countryside.

In this monastery there were twelve monks, two deacons, and a school of twenty students. We were taught Armenian, English, French, Turkish, History, Literature, Geography, Physics, Botany, Zoölogy, Mathematics, and Commentary on the Bible. Our ideal was to become a great leader or a great teacher. The monks in Armenian are called *vartabed,* which means doctor or teacher. They cultivate the sciences, and take degrees which may be compared with the usual academic honors. They spend their days in prayer, devotion to study, and the preservation of old manuscripts. They are pious, revered, and clean-living people. They live in small cells; for their belongings they have but a few articles—their black robes and books. The interior of their cells is very simple, void of decorations, and kept clean and neat. Some of the monks are called by the Armenian people to take the leadership of their spiritual life and work, and a great many of them have rendered valu-

able religious, educational, and political service to the Armenian people. We owe them a great debt.

My life in the monastery was altogether too religious and rather monotonous for a boy. We were in all twenty students, all of us studying for celibacy. We wore long, black, flowing robes, black shoes, and black caps. Our daily work consisted of getting up early in the morning and going to church; then to breakfast; then to study, with play in the afternoon; and church again in the evening. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, we went mountain-climbing and nature-walking, visited historical places, and sang all the Armenian patriotic songs while in the valley or on top of the mountains.

A large hall served as dormitory; each student had his own bedstead. The beds were arranged in two rows, ten on each side, opposite each other. Above his bedstead on the wall each student had a place for his towel, soap, comb, and brush. We

had a night watchman whose duty it was to see that we were kept covered while asleep, and come to our help in case of need. This man sat in the corner of our dormitory in his little room and read all night, keeping himself half awake and half asleep. He was a real help, however, in time of need. Every morning at five o'clock he waked us with his hand-bell.

After we were dressed we fell in line, and each one of us put his head under the running cold water from a faucet to wash our heads. We had to do this every morning, summer and winter, without exception. By the time we were ready, the monastery bell, intended for us and the monks within the monastery, had rung. It was a bell made of a piece of hard wood—a foot wide and three feet long—hung from two chains in the courtyard of the church. It had a weird tone, this bell that invited us to the church. We fell in line, in rows of two, and marched down 150 stone steps to the church.

As we entered the church, we took off our shoes and put on our "church slippers," because, according to Armenian religious custom, you cannot enter the church in your street shoes. Once in the church, we separated into two columns, ten in each; one column marched to the right altar, and the other to the left. In the front of each altar there was a book-stand upon which rested the church hymn-book (*sharagan*). We formed in horse-shoe shape before this book-stand and sang loud our morning hymns. And we sang in order. The first stanza of the hymn was sung by the right side, and as they finished, the left took up the second stanza. We continued in this manner until the entire hymn was sung. Prayers and hymns succeeded each other alternately until the morning ceremonies were over; then we marched to the breakfast-room.

Our breakfast consisted of cheese, butter, milk, and whole-wheat bread. Our dinner and supper consisted of pea soup,

various cooked vegetables, with very little meat. On Wednesdays and Fridays we refrained from meat altogether. After breakfast we went to school and attended our morning classes. In the afternoon after dinner, we played in the vineyard of the monastery and sang religious hymns.

This monastic life and education exerted a great influence over me, especially in the plastic stage of my life. Three years of religious education, confined within the walls of the monastery, entirely out of touch with the outside world, all made me a mystic, gave me a strong sense of intuition, a good heart, indomitable will power, and a sympathetic and helpful personality. By forgetting the world around me, I absorbed some kind of divine power, and soon felt that monastic life had substituted for love of life a divine love—for a love of family and children the love of worship and devotion to God and to His church.

In our school we were taught to disdain bodily pleasures and substitute for them the pleasures of the soul. We developed within us and were given by the people a high sense of self-esteem and self-respect. My education created within me a strong desire to cherish the church and devote myself either to study, or to the spiritual guidance of my people. A strong sense of service had taken root in me. I was eager to deny myself and be of service or of help to some one—any one at all. For this service I was to be recompensed with a peace of conscience on earth and with an everlasting life in heaven. I was completely given over to the idea of service and devotion to God. I had surrendered myself to God's will and command; in return I was to secure His divine love and blessing. Under the influence of the church and the monks, I became intensely pious and respectful towards all—young or old, rich or poor.

But soon after I left the monastery, I

found that the monastic life and education had unfitted me for the life of the world. I could not get along with my fellow beings. I wanted to force my life and my ideals upon them. I wanted to create a new life and a new social order on a higher level. The worldly life seemed too vulgar and too flat. Soon I had become a critic. I used to criticize any one who did not do or act the way I would. My attitude of criticism was, of course, not liked by those who came in contact with me, because they did not understand me. Understanding is the beginning of wisdom. And soon I found out two things: that the complete attainment of my ideal was impossible, and that my attitude as a reformer put me in a very precarious position.

Since leaving the monastery, my life has been in constant oscillation; at times harmonious and at other times discordant with the existing social conditions. I have had bitter struggles to adjust myself to the existing social life; however, I have re-

solved to accept the reality and am trying to make the best of it.

But the spiritual life of the monastery, so very delightful and peaceful, laid in me a firm foundation of brotherly love, a sense of service, of uprightness, of truthfulness, of clean-mindedness, of clean-heartedness, and a strongly sympathetic attitude towards all.

Sometimes I wonder if, after all, I made a mistake in entering the monastery at so early an age!

I continued my monastic life until 1909. In 1908, however, " The Great Assassin," Abdul Hamid, was deposed from his throne, and a Constitution was established; it was to bring Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But it proved to be a false alarm. The young Turks who came in power were just as bad as the Sultan himself. In 1909, seeing that the Armenians were prospering and progressing too rapidly, the Turks made an effort to check this state of affairs.

Turks first began the trouble in my home town, Adana, by accusing the Armenians of preparing to gain their independence by arms. In the spring, the Turks upbraided the Armenians for killing two Turks. It was true indeed that an Armenian had killed two Turks in self-defence. This is how it happened: The young Armenian in question was on his way to his vineyard when two Turks attacked him with intent to kill. The Armenian was a clever fellow, however, and got the better of them by killing both.

The Turks used this event as an excuse to attack the Armenians. Now that there was a Constitution, Armenians could buy arms and ammunition. Knowing the Turks well, Armenians were prepared against any imminent danger.

When the fight broke out, the Armenians overcame the Turks; cleaned the city of the enemy, repulsed the outside attackers, and held the city in their hands for two weeks. The Turks, however, succeeded

through the foreign missionaries in convincing the Armenians that they should lay down their arms for the sake of peace and the new-born Constitution. The Armenians consented to this only upon condition that the Turks, too, lay down their arms. All the arms were then collected from both sides by the government.

Peace was hardly restored when ten battalions of Turkish regular soldiers were brought into Adana from other sections of the country and arms and ammunition were secretly distributed to the Turks. Fighting was resumed again, the Armenians defending themselves with their clubs, knives, and fists. The Turks, as a last resort, burned the city by throwing large quantities of kerosene oil upon the buildings. What they could not accomplish by force, they succeeded in doing by treachery!

Fire and blood spread throughout Cilicia. We in the monastery, at Sis, did not know what was going on, because all

the telegraph wires and other means of communication had been cut off by the Turks. We did not get the news of this horror until one night when fifty-seven wounded Armenian fighters entered our city. They told us the whole story—that they were the survivors of 150 young men who broke through the Turkish regular lines, fighting their way through for a week until they had reached our city. We saw that they were bandaged, clothed, and fed. When this news spread, five hundred young Armenians, all armed, wanted to go to Adana for help; but they were warned by the returning heroes of the danger and practical impossibility of such an attempt.

The entire city, however, stood on its feet! All the women and children were brought to our monastery for safe-keeping; the men and even women were armed.

The Turks of the city had secret orders from the Turkish government to be ready on Easter Sunday afternoon, while the Armenians were at church, to join the

regular soldiers of the city and the mob that was coming from outside, to attack the Armenians. A brave Armenian called *Djin Toros* (Devil Toros) had captured the orders from the Turkish messengers and brought them to us. This stirred the Armenians into taking possession of the gateways, passages, and strategic points of the city, and they advised the Turks of the city to be neutral, otherwise they, too, would be subject to danger. These Turks, although apparently peaceful, were in reality, root and branch, with their brother Turks outside the city.

On Easter Sunday, about five o'clock in the afternoon, I saw a black mass moving on the road to the eastern side of our monastery, and rapidly advancing upon our city. When this black mass gradually came in view, I recognized a long line of armed Turks on horseback swinging their swords and axes high in the air above their heads—a mass partly covered in the dust raised by the hoofs of their galloping

horses. Suddenly they stopped under a large pear-tree on the outside of the city; here the whole mass gathered together, and in one minute, as if it were a one-man party, divided itself into two wings, one wing stretched towards the northeast and the other to the southwest in an attempt to envelop the city.

Then the enemy began to fire and rush upon the city with loud war-cries. A group of Armenians had occupied the castle on the mountain; others were restlessly waiting at the passages and gateways of the city. Armenians were everywhere, in the city, on the mountain, behind the rocks, and in the castles. The Turks in the city began to tremble with fear. With my own eyes, I saw the Turkish mayor come to our monastery, and upon his knees beg our Catholicos not to harm his men, promising his coöperation in driving away the attacking *Bashi Bazouk* (irregulars). The Turks of the city wanted to get in touch with their outside country-

men, to tell them about their hopeless plot, but they were helpless because Armenians had blocked all the passages of communication, and no one could get out of the city.

The right wing of the attacking Turks, firing and shouting, however, swiftly swung upon the city through the green and wavy wheat-fields, while the left wing dashed to the southwest. As they approached the city the Armenians, who were waiting restlessly, fell upon them with a terrible war-cry, at the same time returning the enemy's fire. The whole valley between the Taurus Mountains echoed with the resonant roar of the Armenians. From the east they launched a swift and deadly attack in the name of our king, Leon VI, crying, "Long live Cilicia! Home of the brave sons of Leon!"

The attacking Turks who had expected coöperation from the Turks within the city received a terrible blow from these Armenians. They hesitated; now the Ar-

menians closed in upon them. Both sides were yelling and firing. Armenians closed still further and drew a ring about them. Then began a severe battle at close range.

I can still see the fearless dash of the Armenian cavalry; the cling-clang of swords, the smoke of the guns, the falling of the fighters; I can still hear the neighing of the horses and the clash of swords. The brave Armenians were too much for the Turks! The enemy turned tail and ran for their lives. Thereupon the Armenian cavalry dashed after them and gave chase until all had disappeared in dust among the distant mountains.

But this was not all! The Turks were attacking the city from the west also. They had come from the west to burn the city, while we were being attacked from the east. Quite a scheme, thought these poor devils, who did not realize that the Armenians, no fools, guarded the west as well as the east.

So the fight was being waged on the east and the west simultaneously. On the western side of the city, the Armenians were on foot, taking position behind the rocks of the Mountain of Leon and in the ruined castles on the outskirts of the city. The Turks, who were also on foot, came crawling on their stomachs through the wheat-fields in order to burn the city; when we caught them later, they were loaded down with kindling-wood, kerosene, and matches for use in their intended work.

The Armenians, diligently waiting, were told not to shoot until they were almost in the city. But one bold Armenian could not, and did not wait longer; this was our gunsmith *Khatcho,* who dashed forward and met the Turks face to face in the field. The Turk who had advanced farthest stood up, lifted his gun, and aimed to shoot, but our *Khatcho* was cleverer and quicker. He shot the Turk through the forehead, then swiftly advanced upon the

others. More Armenians followed him. The fight began.

These crawling Turks now threw away their incendiary outfits and taking up their arms, returned fire after jumping into the trenches (which were dug for irrigation purposes and called *khandecks*). The Armenians rallied upon them, yelling, shouting, and firing. I could see all this plainly from the monastery. Most of the Turks who were wounded ran to the river near by, drank water, and were found dead and swollen two days later.

While the battle was being fought on this side, I saw a little donkey that had become alarmed at the sound of the guns and was jumping around in a queer manner, erecting his long ears, and twisting his tail now to the right, now to the left. We could not help laughing, terrible as was the time.

All during the battle I was restless. I wanted to join the fighters. Five of us students went to the leader and asked him

to let us get into the battle. He told us we were too young, that there were enough fighters. We did not like his refusal; our blood was boiling, and we wanted to be in the thick of the battle. Oh, it was so exciting, so wonderful!

For a week we kept watch and guarded the city from any attack, and after that peace and order were restored, and our city was safe, thanks to our heroic fighters.

Whenever Armenians have had a chance to fight the Turks on equal terms and on a fair ground, they have proved themselves superior. Turks know this well!

THE GLORY OF ARMENIA.
Famous Characters in Armenian History.

CHAPTER V

MY HOME AND MY FAMILY

I COME from a family of merchants and clergymen, my father having been a well-known merchant in my native city. He was a brave man, tall, well-built, of fair skin, brown eyes, and blond hair.

The house in which we lived in Adana was very modest in structure and appearance. It was built of sun-baked mud bricks. There were four buildings, each two stories in height, and facing each other, with a large courtyard in the center. Our house was flat-roofed; all Armenian houses are built in this fashion, to serve a special purpose. In the summer when the weather was too warm, we used to put up a screened *chardack* on the flat roof of our house and sleep upon it. This is an elevated wooden stand (like the band-stands you see in America) which

can be easily dismantled and stored away for the winter.

As a boy I remember, when I was sent to bed early (all the Armenian boys go to bed early) during the summer evenings, how I used to lie on my back in bed on the *chardack,* watching the bright stars twinkling in the clear, blue sky; intently observing the milky way, and closely following the path of the shooting stars; for, according to an Armenian legend, each time a shooting star falls, a person dies in the direction pointed out by the meteor. How diligently I used to count those stars, until, tired of my boyish efforts to find an end, I fell asleep! It was a very pleasant way, indeed, to fall asleep.

In our courtyard we had a garden, a well, from which we got our drinking water, and a *tonir* to bake our bread. A *tonir* is a big earthen jar built on the ground, four feet in height, circular in shape, and with a round opening on top. When bread is to be baked, a fire is made

inside the *tonir*. The dough, after being flattened on the board by an *okhlavoo,* is taken by the baker-woman on the palm of the hand and arm, and stuck to the inside hot walls of the *tonir*. In three minutes the bread is baked! This kind of baking makes the bread easily digestible, and it can be kept for a long time without moulding. After being baked, the bread is stored away in large wooden boxes. When it is to be used, it is sprinkled over with water and wrapped in a white cloth, or it may be eaten dry, like crackers. I preferred to eat mine dry, and found it was very tasteful. The bread-baking is done by professional baker-women who travel from house to house and ask if their services are needed. They usually know when bread is needed in such and such a family.

Our well had around its mouth a stone wall, about three feet in height, a wheel, rope, and pail. Each time we wanted water, we used to lower the pail into the well and draw out the water by the wheel.

I remember that it is very easy to fall into such wells and get drowned; many boys have been drowned in this way.

Our house was entered through a large door with two wings, an iron knocker on each wing. As we had no electric buttons, the visitor had to make use of this device in order to enter. When some one knocked at the door, I used to call out, "Who is there?" The visitor had to give his name in a loud voice, and only when we recognized a friend, did we open the door. Three families (all relatives) lived in our house, each occupying a two-story building.

The first story of our house was used for a cellar, where we kept twelve large earthen jars of provisions, filled with dried vegetables, fruits, cereals, raisins, nuts; and two large jars of wine. The cellar was my favorite; here I used to break in often and fill my pockets with raisins and nuts, of which I was very fond.

On the second floor we had one large

and one small room spanned by a piazza. The former served as a kitchen and the latter as a living-room and dining-room. The third room was our sleeping chamber, where we had a *yukluk* covered with a curtain. A *yukluk* is a wooden, elevated structure, set inside the back wall, where our beds were kept in the daytime. We did not use any bedsteads (this is the custom with all Armenians). At bedtime, the beds are spread on the floor of the room, and in the morning they are folded and placed in the *yukluk,* and the curtain pulled over so that no one is able to see them. It is rather a back-breaking job for the women who have to fold the beds twice a day.

In the center of our living-room was a large rug, with long rugs on each side of the room, and cushions stuffed with wool. We had no chairs; we sat on these rugs, our legs folded, and leaned against the cushions. There were no pictures on the walls; instead we had twelve large bunches

of winter grapes and six large winter melons hanging by ropes from the ceiling. And in place of electricity or gas, our room was lighted with three kerosene lamps. For ventilation, the door, windows, and fireplace served the purpose. Neither did we have steam heat or hot air; our room was heated with three *manghals* (tin receptacles held on tripods) in which we made a charcoal fire, and these, when ready, we brought into the room. The family then circled around to warm themselves. Another way of heating was the *ojach,* a kind of old-fashioned fireplace, where we made a fire. Altogether, we were quite warm and comfortable.

There were no " movies " or theatres in my home town. Usually the neighbors came to our house in the evening and told stories (*hekiat*), to which I listened with great attention and enthusiasm; or they would read the daily papers and discuss the news. Playing cards—particularly backgammon—(a favorite indoor sport

with John Locke, the great English philosopher) is a very popular pastime in Armenia. Just as " bridge " is absorbing to Americans, so is the backgammon the delight of Armenians; once they begin, it becomes difficult for them to quit.

No Armenian boy or girl is allowed outside the house after six o'clock, unless accompanied by a chaperon. After I did all my studies, I went early to bed with a prayer; each morning, also, I prayed before breakfast.

The Armenian Food

Our food is simple but very wholesome. For breakfast we had fried eggs, tea, and bread. Lunch was light, but our supper rather elaborate.

Our food consisted of fresh, cooked vegetables, eggs, fresh lamb, and fresh fish. We are not acquainted with canned food, storage eggs, or storage meat. Everything we eat is bought fresh every day. We dried our vegetables for the winter.

The most favorite Armenian dishes in my town were *pilav, madzoon, kufteh, sarma, dolma,* and *kebab.*

Pilav is made of coarsely ground whole wheat after it is washed, boiled, and dried. Then it is cooked with tomatoes and fresh butter. This dish is very delicious and easy to digest. *Madzoon* is what the Americans call "sour milk." It is made by boiling the milk and letting it cool until it is lukewarm, then adding vegetable yeast, covering it, and letting ferment. In three hours' time, you have delicious *madzoon* ready. Many Americans who are surprised at the longevity of Armenians, may wish to know the cause; it is attributable partly to their sobriety and regular hours, but more especially to the use of *madzoon.* It has been well demonstrated by the great Russian bacteriologist, Metchnikoff, that *madzoon* or "sour milk" is a great aid to longevity by its helpful action on the bacteria in the intestinal tract. *Sarma* and *dolma* are made

by stuffing fresh minced-meat mixed with rice or *bulgoor* in grape-vine leaves, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, and cabbage. *Kebab* is broiled lamb.

The Armenian Family

Armenians observe an improved form of the old patriarchal family. The father or eldest living male rules supreme. The mother, on the other hand, is the queen of the house; she rules supreme in domestic affairs. Her duty is to see that the children are properly clothed, and look neat and clean. She does not mind her husband's business, nor does the husband mix in his wife's domestic affairs; there is a distinct division of work and duties between husband and wife. Each tries to excel in his own field. This system eliminates many unpleasant quarrels and misunderstandings, replacing them with mutual understanding, love, and devotion. In the evening the husband comes directly home from work; he has no clubs to go to, or busi-

ness engagements to make, hence stays at home and passes his evenings pleasantly with his family.

Husband and wife are mutual companions in life, their aim being the upkeep and maintenance of a happy family. There is mutual love and respect for each other; a sincere loyalty runs through the whole family. Every boy is envious of his family's name and pride, and he will safeguard it zealously.

The father is considered the "king," and the mother the "queen" of the house. Both are respected and implicitly obeyed by their children, who do not and cannot give them "back talk," or tell them that they are wrong in this or that matter; they never say, "I won't."

In the house, the father occupies the highest seat and is followed by his children according to their age. The young man cannot smoke in the presence of his parents, and is not allowed to talk without permission, especially in the presence of a

guest. The daughters are the helpmates of the mother. Usually they serve their parents the coffee and refreshments, carrying the tray to the eldest member first and making a bow. After all cups are removed, they walk back and stand in the rear of the room, tray in hand, until all the coffee cups are emptied; then another bow as each person is approached and relieved of the china.

Grown-up boys and young men, even after they are married and have children of their own, refrain from smoking or drinking in the presence of their parents. Usually the married son does not leave his father's house; it is a common thing to see an Armenian family with as many as sixty members. In our family there were twenty-two, all living in separate flats in the same house.

At meal times, the women do not join their men. Two separate dining-tables are set; one for the men, and another for the women and children. No woman joins

the men's table except the grandmother; it is not considered etiquette. Our dining-table was a large, round affair about one foot in height. We sat around this table, the eldest always sitting at the head. A prayer was said before and after each meal, usually by the youngest boy of the family. Before the meal, I used to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and after the meal the following prayer: "May our God, the Father, bless and preserve the plentifulness of our table; blessed be His name; Amen."

After dinner and a wash, men sit in the room and smoke their water-pipes (*nargileh*) or roll their cigarettes. I have often carried fire for the water-pipe; its gurgle and bubble amused me very much. After dinner we washed our hands under a faucet. When we had a guest, we had quite a different method of washing the hands, to wit: a round basin with a cover (punctured by many holes) on which there was an elevated place for the soap. Be-

sides this we had an *ubruk,* a silver-plated metal jug filled with water. I used to sling a towel over my left arm, take the jug in my right, and, holding the wash-basin in my left, make the round by setting the basin in front of the person who wished to use it, pouring water over his hands and handing him the towel.

Women begin to eat after the men are through. After the women are through eating, all dishes are washed and nothing is left unclean for to-morrow. There is no fight over "Who will do the dishes?" Nor is the husband asked "to help his wife in the kitchen."

In Adana, we had thirty mules and five horses kept in the stable in a *khan* (inn) of the city. We had a government contract for "the snow of the mountains." Our mules were sent to the mountains with caretakers, who brought large blocks of snow wrapped in felt. When the snow reached the city, it was unwrapped and stored away in the straw pile in a one-story

house. All the jobbers of the city had to come and buy the snow from us. As I mentioned before, Adana is quite warm in the summer, so we had much need for snow. It was mixed with different drinks and sold to the people by the jobbers. Each year we had to pay the government 250 Turkish pounds (a little over $1,000) for this privilege.

Besides the snow business, my relatives had three department stores for dry-goods. They were well-known for their honesty in business and charity to the poor.

HARVEST TIME.

CHAPTER VI

THE INFANCY OF AN ARMENIAN CHILD

Customs and Ceremonies

THE customs and ceremonies attending the infancy of an Armenian child seem very curious to Americans. Customs are habits strongly fixed in the lives of individuals or a people; they cannot be eradicated easily. Our customs still survive as they were handed down to us from our forefathers.

According to an Armenian superstition, the new-born child should be carefully and constantly guarded, because the *gagh crogh* (lame devil) is anxious either to steal or change the child, or strangle him at birth. For this reason, the nurse, (called *ebe*) who has been watching the "lame devil" and praying, lights a candle and burns incense, blowing the smoke gently towards the bed of the mother, in

the meantime murmuring something in a low voice, being careful that the mother does not hear. By crossing her face, she says a prayer to chase the "lame devil" away. When the nurse is very anxious, she gently blows the candle light towards the face of the mother, and utters the following prayer:

> "May the light of Christ,
> And the breath of our Saviour
> Give you comfort and strength."

When the child is born, the nurse takes it into her arms and congratulates the mother. Then all the members of the family in turn pass the baby around and greet each other; they do not, however, kiss the child, because he is not yet baptized. Immediately after birth, the child's nose is shaped to give it the form of an eagle's beak, because this shape is liked by the Armenians. The child is then dressed in white clothes. After eight days, the child is taken to the church, where it is baptized

by immersion in the holy font three times, and anointed with "holy oil" prepared from 1,001 species of flowers by our Catholicos—the head of the Armenian church in Cilicia.

During the baptism, the godfather takes the child in his arms, standing directly in front of the altar and holding a burning candle in each hand. After the baptism, the child is brought home in the arms of the godfather with burning candles and followed with relatives and friends. At the time of baptism, the godfather professes the Christian faith in the child's name, and takes the responsibility of his religious and moral education. When the party reaches home, all relatives, friends, and neighbors come to the child's house with many presents, and greet the mother. And there is a great feast.

After another eight days, the child is taken out of its swaddling clothes and wrapped in new ones containing red earth from the vineyard. The earth is warmed

before being used. Many times have I been asked the reason why Armenians wrapped their children in red earth. According to tradition, red earth is used to bind the child to its mother earth so that it will not renounce and forget the latter while in a foreign country. According to another tradition, the red earth is used so that the child can draw strength and life from it.

The babe is carefully wrapped, with the hands close to the body, and put into the cradle. The mother places the child on its back, and it is always kept lying on its back—never on its side. The cradle is generally low and egg-shaped; small bells and rattles hang from its side, so that when the cradle is in motion, the child goes to sleep from the tinkle of those bells. Mother knows many lullabies with which to sing her babe to sleep.

It is also a custom to decorate with blue beads the arm of the child, or hang a cross from the forehead in order to protect the

child from "evil eyes." When the child is two or three months old, it is put in a swinging cradle. A long rope is attached at one end of this cradle, and mother has the other end while she swings baby to sleep. If the mother is busy doing bead-work or knitting, she will attach the end of the rope to her big toe, thus swinging the child to sleep while she is doing her work.

The following is an example of the many Armenian lullabies:

"Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
You will sleep by and by;
Our great silvery moon
Will shine upon you soon."

When a child is six months old, it is put in a *tender* (a device which teaches the child to walk). This is a fixture made up of two flat boards, each two feet square and nailed to four sticks. This fixture extends as far as the child's armpits; there is a hole on the top board. The child is lowered through the hole on the bottom

board, his head and arms left outside, and his body tied to the sticks so that the child cannot sit down. This device teaches baby how to stand up. When the time comes for it to walk, it is put in front of a triangular wheeled apparatus; the child, holding on to the top and tied to it, walks up and down the room.

When the child is one year old (and begins to teethe), a blanket is spread on the floor of the room, the child is blindfolded and placed in the center of it, and there are articles scattered around the child—a mirror, scissors, book, hammer, etc. Different articles are used for boys and for the girls. When everything is ready, the mother, holding a sifter above the head of the child—the sifter being filled with boiled and dried wheat seeds (*hadig*)—gently shakes the sifter in a circular motion. When the wheat seeds drop on and around the child, its eyes are unfolded. Seeing many articles about, the child picks up that one which interests him

most, and this article decides the little one's professional career.

I was told that I had picked up the Bible; that is why, I presume, I studied for the priesthood. This ceremony is performed before a circle of relatives and friends. It is very significant in the life of a child, and a happy occasion for the mother. She is delighted and heartily congratulated by all those present if the child picks up a book, for that is a sign that her child will become great and famous.

CHAPTER VII

WEDDINGS

The wedding day is the happiest day in the Armenian's life; it is also a day of serious responsibilities, for Armenians consider marriage as serious and sacred. Furthermore, a wedding is a gala day for little boys and girls, because on this occasion they are given a good time and plenty of candy, *basdech, rodjick,* and *koulindga* (Armenian sweets).

The Armenian marriage is indissoluble; the church refuses to accord divorce; although separation is allowed, under very serious conditions; the separated party cannot marry again. So, you see, married couples in Armenia are faced with a very solemn problem when they marry. Once united, they try to make the best of it by ironing out all minor differences and bravely suppressing the major ones. No courtship is allowed before marriage.

The first step towards marriage is *chosk-gab*. The priest examines the bride and groom to see that they are not related to each other and that their ages are appropriate, for Armenians marry early. After *chosk-gab* comes the engagement; as a present, the fiancé gives the fiancée the following articles: (1) an engagement ring, (2) a bracelet, (3) a pair of earrings, and (4) a veil. The fiancée wears the ring on the fourth finger of her right hand (which corresponds to the vein from the heart), to show that she consented to marry him with her own heart; the bracelet indicates that with her own hand she binds herself in obedience to him; the earrings indicate that she heard the request with her own ears and consented to it with her own mind.

Seven days before the marriage ceremony, relatives and friends gather together in the fiancé's house to hold a preliminary feast. During these seven days, both sides make *koulinja* (scones) upon

which are printed various figures. These are distributed to those present by two elderly women from the side of the groom, and serve as invitation cards. If the groom is a rich man, they distribute two candles with each *koulinja;* if he is not rich, the *koulinja* stands, and if he is poor, just a candle is sent.

Thursday is the day of the feast, interrupted on Friday, on account of fasting on that day, and it recommences on Saturday. The guests take with them provisions—jugs of wine, a live lamb, and sweets—then go to the home of the bride to make merry. Later in the evening, the groom's relatives go to the home of the bride, dancing on their way. When they reach the home to ask for the bride, they find the door closed. After a long conversation and many requests, they win the consent of the bride's relatives to open the door, after many valuable presents are made.

In the evening is performed the " shav-

ing ceremony " of the groom. He is seated in a chair surrounded by a chorus of boys who, while he is being shaved and his hair cut, sing the following song:

" Let us sing of your face,
Your face that shines like the moon.
Let us sing of your eyes,
Your eyes full of fire.
Let us sing of your teeth,
Which resemble a row of pearls.
Let us sing of your stature
Tall and solid like the oak of
the woods."

After the groom is shaved and his hair cut, his clothes are auctioned off to those present, and while the auction proceeds, the groom must needs stand there and shiver with cold. His wedding clothes are blessed, and he is then dressed in his new wedding clothes. This ceremony is followed by *henna,* that is, the maid-of-honor places a handful of kneaded *henna* on a plate, surrounded by twinkling candles, and, accompanied by others, comes towards the bride, dancing. The guests

plaster the dancers' foreheads with money as a sign of consent. The maid-of-honor then puts *henna* on the hands and finger nails of the bride, sometimes, also, on her toes. Later in the evening begins the ceremony of "hiding the bride." The guests on the groom's side come to ask for the bride. The request is met with resistance from the side of the bride. After presents are given, and songs sung in praise of the bride, she comes out of her hiding-place. The following is an example of the song:

"Come out, beautiful!
Come out to our home!
Whose daughter are you,
So pretty and so bright?

You are the daughter of the
Brown-eyed mother;
Your mother has given you to us;
We have come for you.

Come out, our bride,
Come to us, now;
For you are so beautiful and
so bright!"

Upon this, the parents and guests of the bride consent to the request of the groom's party, bring the bride out of her hiding-place, and give her to the groom. At this point, the bride cries, for she does not want to leave her parents. But she is advised and directed by the mother and relatives to obey. At the time of giving the bride away, the groom holds a present in his closed fist (usually a five-dollar gold-piece). If the maid-of-honor can open the groom's fist, he is not considered a strong man; if she cannot (and usually she cannot), he is considered strong and brave; then he willingly opens his fist and gives her the gold-piece.

Monday morning the guests on the groom's side gather in front of the house of the bride. The bride and groom (each on horseback) ride to church amid songs and dances. In the church, the best man stands by the side of the groom with a naked sword in his right hand, and a cross in his left, his face turned towards the

bride and the groom. After the priest makes his prayer, the bride and groom exchange rings; the bride puts her ring on the groom's finger, and the groom puts his on the bride's finger as a sign of unbreakable unity; then the groom places his right foot gently on the bride's left foot until the end of the ceremony.

During the ceremony, the priest wraps a red handkerchief around the groom's neck and gives him a cross in his left hand; then the best man hangs the sword on the right side of the groom, who wears the crown of a king, and the bride that of the queen; thus, both are proclaimed by the priest as "king" and "queen." After the ceremony, the priest distributes blessed wine to all unmarried young men and young women so that they, too, may be blessed with the fortune of marriage.

When all the wedding ceremonies are completed, the bride and groom exchange their horses, the groom leading. The reins of the bride's horse are attached to

the tail of the groom's horse so that no one may pass between them; for that would be considered a bad omen. After leaving the church, they ride to the groom's house on horseback amid more dancing and singing. As soon as the party reaches the door, a lamb is slaughtered on the threshold as a sign of the foundation of a new home. On the way to the house, the groom scatters silver and gold coins which are diligently picked up by the children as fast as they fall. When they reach the house, the mother-in-law comes out to meet the bride, kisses her on the forehead, saying:

"I am iron,
I am steel."

And the bride, after kissing the hand of her mother-in-law, answers her, in a low, whispering tone, from beneath her veil:

"Wait, until I get inside,
You will see how I will squeeze
the iron and steel."

Then the group on the bride's side begin to sing to the mother-in-law the following song:

"O mother of a king,
Come out and see
What we have brought to you!

We have brought a rose,
A violet we have brought,
We have brought a home-builder
A helper we have brought."

Then the "messengers of misfortune"—a group of women—take up the following song:

"O mother of king,
Come out and look,
Look what they have brought you!

—They have brought you an
evil thorn,
An evil thorn to your home.

Look what they have brought
A home-breaker they have brought.
Look what they have brought
A heart-eater they have brought
A divider of your bread they have
brought."

The mother-in-law gives presents and money in order to stop their bad tidings, and upon this, their singing is hushed.

The bride and groom together with all the guests now enter the house where refreshments are served. The bride kisses her mother-in-law's hands, after which she offers an apple (decorated with cloves and candles) to the groom who, after taking the apple, cuts it in two with his sword, and offers one half to the bride, eating the second half himself.

After fifteen days of marriage, the groom goes to visit his father-in-law. When he is inside the door, the mother-in-law throws a block of wood or the stump of a tree before him, at the same time giving him an axe. The groom divides the wood with two strokes, and leaves the axe in the groove of the block made by a third stroke, then enters the house of his mother-in-law. After a cordial reception, the mother-in-law places the key of her house before the feet of the

groom as a sign of his being the master of her house. In departing, the groom, however, leaves the key with them, kissing the hands of his mother-in-law and receiving her blessings for good luck and happiness.

Although I have used the present tense in describing them, to-day the above customs and ceremonies are not followed, the Armenians performing their marriage ceremonies after the custom and style of Europeans.

ARMENIAN GIRL.
In Typical National Costume.

CHAPTER VIII

ARMENIAN GAMES AND SPORTS

Armenian games are different in character from American games, but they are essentially the same everywhere in that they are played to give satisfaction to an urgent desire which is almost instinctive in children of all lands.

Armenian games are few and simple; the sports, still fewer, and rather difficult to play, besides being decidedly hazardous in character. We had no baseball, basketball, nor football in Armenia. These were only recently introduced by American teachers.

When I was eight years old, I used to build brick houses, wooden wheels and carts, in which I took my rides, and small tables and chairs. As I grew older, I began to play first blindfold, marbles (*kentag*), top (*hol*), and knuckle-bones (*vek*).

The following games were my favorites, as a boy in Armenia:

Marbles. This popular game is played by making a circle on dry ground and each boy putting down one marble into it, in a straight line. Then, tightly holding a marble between the back of his thumb and forefinger, and standing at a distance of six feet from the circle, the boy shoots it hard and fast at the row of marbles in the center of the circle. If he puts out one or more marbles without leaving his marble in the circle, he wins the marbles he puts out. Each boy in turn takes a shot at the marbles. I was very fond of this game, perhaps because I was more successful at it than at some of the other sports. We usually played marbles in the spring and in the fall.

Knuckle-Bones. This game is played in two different ways. In one, the object is to tell one's fortune; in the other, it is a pastime. The fortune-teller takes one knuckle-bone in his hand; before

throwing it on the ground, he asks you, however, to make a wish; you make a wish, and then call for the knuckle-bones "heads or tails." Upon this, the fortune-teller throws the knuckle-bone on the ground. If the knuckle-bone comes the way you have called it, your wish will come true; if it does not, you will have "bad luck."

A second way of playing knuckle-bones is to make a circle, say two feet in diameter, placing in the center of the circle in a straight line as many knuckle-bones as there are players. One of the players begins to shoot at the knuckle-bones with another knuckle-bone, from a distance of ten feet. The purpose is to hit those in the circle, and hit them hard enough so as to put them out of the circle, being careful that your knuckle does not remain in the circle; if it does, you are proclaimed "dead"; you lose your knuckle-bone and are whisked out of the game to wait until a new game is begun. The knuckle-bones

which are used for throwing purposes are usually loaded with lead so that they may fly fast through the air and strike hard at the knuckle-bones inside the circle.

Shar Baran. This game is played in the following way: The boys fall in a circle by joining their little fingers together, and leaving spaces between the boys. Two boys stand in the center of the circle. One of them is called "cat," the other "mouse." The "mouse" begins the game by gently tapping the "cat" on the shoulder and running through one of the openings of the circle. The "cat" then runs after the "mouse" with the purpose of catching the latter. The "mouse" runs through one opening and then another, making a zig-zag run all around the circle; the "cat" has to follow the "mouse" carefully; if it catches the "mouse," they change positions. This is a very interesting game and it requires a great deal of ingenuity to follow the trail of the "mouse" carefully.

Tutush. One boy stands at the base,

and with a club gently hits a piece of stick, sharp at each end and about five inches long; the stick flies in the air and, while it is flying, the boy strikes it again with the club with all his strength. So the stick flies high, fast and far in the air. There are several boys in the field; any one who catches the stick as it drops goes to the base to hit it. This may also be called "one-man baseball."

Gap. (*G* is hard and *a* is sounded like the French ā.) Twelve small, flat pebbles are placed in the palm, then gently thrown in the air and caught on the back of the hand, being careful lest one of them falls to the ground; if it does, the player loses his chance and his opponent takes his turn with great zest.

Gegoudge. (The first two *g's* are hard and the last soft.) The players of this game must have from twenty-five to fifty English walnuts. A hole is dug in the ground, usually near the bottom of a wall. One player takes charge of the hole—he is

called the "banker." From a distance of five to six feet, the players in turn throw walnuts, with both palms of the hand, into the hole. If they get an even number of walnuts in the hole, they receive that many walnuts from the "banker"; if the number of walnuts is odd, they lose them all to the "banker." Usually there is a great deal of quarreling over the right count of these walnuts.

Ala Peshdig. All players sit on the ground forming a circle. One of the boys, holding a knotted handkerchief in his hand, goes around the circle and secretly drops it behind one of them; he keeps on going around until he reaches the same fellow behind whom he left the handkerchief; if the boy is not aware, the runner takes the handkerchief and hits him on the back until the fellow, who receives the strikes, makes a full circle and sits back in his seat.

Shoror-Medz Baran. Two rows of boys, standing opposite each other, move

backward and forward by clapping their hands.

Kar-Tir (slinging). Two or more boys aim at a mark some distance away and sling at it; the one who hits the mark wins the game.

Dempig. One boy is chosen by casting lots. The boys gather round him; one of them suddenly hits him in the back and runs away. The boy who was hit runs after him. If he catches him before someone else hits him, the one caught is placed in his position; if not, he is kept running after each boy who hits him last. Each time he has to run after the one who hits him last.

Tsatgerdan or *Esh-Khāghoog* (jumping or donkey game). A point is agreed upon on the ground. Each player jumps to that point; the one who does not succeed in jumping to that point stoops low, and the rest of the boys jump over him. The boy gradually raises himself up to the point where he stands at his full height, ex-

cept that his head is bent forward. If any one of the boys fails to jump over him at this height, he takes his place; if all the boys succeed, then the leader places a handkerchief on his back, being careful while jumping that it stays there; the rest of the boys follow him, one by one; whoever drops the handkerchief takes his place.

Tops. Three or four boys spin their tops on the ground; the top that stops spinning first is proclaimed "dead" and placed on the ground. Each boy takes a shot at the "dead" top with his top. In throwing your top you have to aim at it with the purpose of hitting it; while your top is spinning, you pick it up in the palm of your hand, and, lifting it to the height of your belt, drop it carefully on the "dead" top. You should not miss it; if you do, you will have to place your top on the ground. Those tops which are not well aimed are usually full of holes made by the winning tops. It is a mark of dis-

tinction, in this game, to have a top without peg-holes.

Sports

These are usually played by grown-up persons.

Djirid. Two groups of men, on horseback, stand in two opposite camps half a mile distant from each other. Each man on horseback has a long stick in his hand. One of the group rides on his horse to the enemy camp and challenges them by throwing his stick at them, with an intention to hit. He is responded to quickly enough by a man on horseback from the enemy camp, who charges upon the challenger and chases him back to his camp, trying to overtake him and hitting him with his stick; or, if he cannot overtake him, and is a "good shot," he throws his stick, like a javelin, flying through the air after his opponent. As soon as he reaches the boundaries of the enemy camp, he is attacked by a new man on horseback; then

he turns his horse around and runs back home. The chaser repeats the same thing. The side that makes the most hits wins the game. This is a very exciting and hazardous sport. Only good horseback riders play. During the play, there is music in both camps.

Wrestling. Wrestling is a well-liked sport in which all young men indulge with great zest and vigor. It is generally held in the open in the presence of a great crowd. One man challenges the whole crowd in a loud voice, saying that there is no one who can wrestle him. In every case, the challenger meets an opponent, because among the Armenians it is considered poor sport not to take up a challenge. The wrestlers wear tights which reach from the waist to the knees. The rest of the body is naked, and in some cases oiled.

Wrestling and *djirid* are usually played on holidays and Sundays.

When I was a boy, I was very fond of

General Antranik.
The National Hero of the Armenians.

wrestling and wrestling stories. I have heard stories about an Armenian called "Simon the Lion," who could down anybody in wrestling. There are many stories about him, but the following is one of the best:

Once, when Simon was sitting in front of his house, a champion wrestler who had heard about "Simon the Lion" came to find him in his home town. He met Simon sitting in front of his house, his back against the wall and whittling a stick; this champion told Simon, without knowing who he was, that he had come to wrestle "Simon the Lion" and he wanted to know where he could find him. Simon said to him: "If you lift one of my legs from off the ground, I will tell you where he is." Scornfully the champion stooped to lift Simon's left foot with one hand, but not being able to lift it, tried with both hands. Upon seeing that it was impossible for him to lift Simon's leg, he at once "came to" himself, and said, "So

you are Simon the Lion; you really are strong; I came to wrestle with you, but I now see that I have been a fool." With these words in his mouth he left the town. It is said that once, when Simon got angry, he grasped cows and horses and threw them over a six-foot wall. He is said to have been so strong and tough that he could plough the ground with his feet.

CHAPTER IX

NATIVE INDUSTRIES

Armenia was once one of the earliest centers of world civilization, learning, commerce, and wealth, and at the close of the sixth century, exceedingly wealthy and prosperous. Great centers of population and commerce existed in Armenia, and the fame of its cities and products had spread over the then known world. Its decay began with the invasions of the Persians, and was hastened by those of the Arabs. What the Persians and Arabs began, the Seljuks and Ottoman Turks completed. From that time on, the economic and industrial condition of Armenia has steadily become worse. The great industrial centers no longer exist; commerce languished and finally almost expired. Agriculture has also greatly suffered from the disappearance of the Armenian peasants from the soil.

To-day there are few native industries, few handicrafts, and even these are confined to very humble limits.

In the following pages I shall endeavor to give all the Armenian industries I have seen as a boy in my home town:

Rug-Making

Rug-making is the most prosperous of the Armenian industries, because there is a great demand in Europe and America for the beautiful rugs made by Armenians. The rugs made in individual looms are woven by hand, very tedious work. The worker is obliged to make a loop and a knot each time he proceeds. It takes from one to six months or a year for one man to make a good rug. Some rugs take two years for completion. But these rugs are well made, and last for generations without much fading or signs of wear. The more worn they are, the more valuable they become.

Silk

The silk industry is second in importance. The work of raising the cocoon and the worm is all done under one roof. There are large tracts of land planted with mulberry-trees upon whose leaves feed the silkworms. I have visited many silkworm nurseries, and found it very interesting and instructive to watch the silkworms feed on the mulberry-tree leaves and spin their cocoons around themselves. When you watch two or three thousand silkworms feeding, you will hear a weird music made by the rasping of their mouths.

Looms

In our city we had two factories engaged in making plain lining for clothes. The clothes that we wore were generally made by men who had looms in their houses. These men bought their own material, made clothes, and sold the garments directly to the merchants. We have no

machinery for separating the cotton from the cone; it is all separated by hand.

Dye-Houses

These are one-story mud-brick buildings. If you visit the inside of a dye-house, you will see many large earthen tanks in a row, each set upon a small fireplace. Each tank contains a different color. The dyer takes the plain cloth and dips it into that tank filled with boiling dye; after the cloth is thoroughly soaked with the color, it is taken out, wrung, and spread on the ground outside the house to dry. Very amusing is it to see red, blue, yellow, and green dyed clothes spread on the ground side by side. The dyer's hands bear all the colors of the rainbow; even his finger nails are decorated. The color never comes out; he eats with stained hands, and dyes with stained hands. Hence the dyer is always to be distinguished by his hands; in fact all artisans may be distinguished by their hands.

Shoemaking

There are no shoe factories in Armenia. An entire street in my city was devoted to shoemakers and cobblers. They work in one-story shops which open directly on the street. All shoes are made by hand. There are no shoe stores; if you want to buy shoes, you have to go to the shoemaker and have them made to order. Besides the regular shoes, we have another kind which is made entirely of soft leather, called *yemeni,* with a tail in the back. It is very interesting to watch the shoemaker and especially the bootmaker work at his bench sewing, nailing, and taking the shoes out of their lasts. Our boots are larger and reach to our knees. I have seen bootmakers take hold of the top of the boot between their teeth and push the last out with their hands. Instead of iron stands, the Armenian shoemaker, when nailing the sole on the shoe, saddles the shoe on his knee, and, with a piece of

leather strap tied to his foot, he holds the shoe firm while pounding it with a hammer.

Goldsmithing

Goldsmiths occupy an entire street by themselves, and work diligently on jewelry and watches. They are very skilful in their trade, and can engrave on gold, silver, bronze, and wood; some of their work Europeans consider very beautiful art.

Dry-Goods Merchants

These tradesmen occupy a particular street. It is very amusing to see them in their stores on a busy day, measuring cloth with their yardsticks; they are very fast and clever with the yardstick. The prices are not marked on goods for sale; hence there is a great deal of haggling, and a great deal of time and effort lost in making the sale.

Ironsmiths

These, also, occupy a street of their own. Of all the artisans, they are the

earliest to rise and begin work. Quite often have I been awakened by the music of their hammer and anvil. I always loved to hear that ding-dong, ding-dong piercing the clear quiet of the morning. When I was a boy I was very much impressed by them, and often watched them at work, trying to catch the flying sparks from the red-hot iron. I liked to fancy these ironsmiths as Olympian gods making iron chains for their captives.

Blacksmiths

These are on another street. They make their own nails and iron shoes. The horses ready to be shod stand in a row on the outside of the shop. The shoeing is done in the following manner: The apprentice throws a rope around the ankle of the foot to be shod, lifts it up, and holds it in place against his loins while the master puts on the shoe. The blacksmith's trade is a very hazardous one in Armenia; many men have received deadly kicks from

the horses, and others have been disabled for life.

Dairies

There are no scientific dairies in Armenia. Milk, cream, cheese, and butter are prepared on the farm by the Armenian peasants and brought to the city on market days, where they are sold to the people. Then, with his money in his pocket, the peasant farmer buys agricultural necessities and returns to his farm.

Wool and Cotton

The preparation of wool and the raising of cotton are done by hand.

Seeds and Cereals

A great part of this industry is carried on in different centers of Armenia, and oil extracted from the seeds.

ARMENIAN PEASANT WOMEN CHURNING BUTTER.

CHAPTER X

ARMENIAN HEROES AND HEROINES

My purpose in writing this chapter is twofold. In the first place I believe that all boys like heroes and are enthusiastic and eager to know all about them. As a boy, I was very fond of reading books on heroes of all nationalities; with great zest and delight have I re-read Carlyle's book called "Heroes and Hero Worship." I advise all intelligent American boys to read it. Secondly, I want to write this chapter because of the misrepresentation of Armenian bravery and courage by some unauthoritative, especially hired Europeans.

Long and splendid is the chain of Armenian heroes and heroines, from the founder of our nation, Haïg, to the great World War. It is outside the scope of this little book, and would take a separate volume to treat this subject exhaustively.

I shall not even go as far back as the time of the Byzantine Empire when the best and the most courageous soldiers were chosen from among the Armenians for the Imperial Guard. I shall give here only heroes and heroines whose deeds of bravery, indomitable courage, and self-sacrifice have become famous in the last fifty years.

On another page of this book, the reader will see in pictures proof of my statement. These pictures have been taken from actual photographs; furthermore, a few of these persons are still living.

It is a truth apparent that there must be an actual occasion or a condition of life, plus an incentive which spurs men and women on to heroic actions. Such conditions gave France Jean d'Arc, England the Duke of Wellington, and the United States Washington and Paul Revere.

The Armenians' bitter struggle for freedom against the Turks has served as an occasion to give rise to many heroes and

heroines among the Armenian people during the last fifty years.

I shall begin my story with General Antranik, the greatest and most beloved Armenian hero of recent times. This man was a carpenter by trade. When only twenty-four years old, he saw the injustice, robberies, and crimes committed by the Turks against the Armenians, so left his work and tools behind to devote himself to fight for the freedom of his people. In thirty-five years of military service with a group of volunteers, he has had three hundred encounters and over fifty actual battles with regular Turkish forces. In no one of his battles has he received a scratch. During the fight, while men fell on his right and on his left, he seemed miraculously protected from the bullets of the enemy. With his men in the trenches, he was always seen in the field, sword in hand, always spurring on, inspiring, and leading his men.

Antranik was a great and sincere ex-

ample to his soldiers; all his men liked him and revered him to the point of worship. He has fought for days without food and shelter, many times storming and taking by surprise Turkish forces larger than his own. On many a night, he passed in disguise through the Turkish lines unawares.

It was General Antranik who, in the World War, held the Turkish and German forces at bay for six months in the Caucasus, thus preventing them from reaching the rich oil wells of Russia. For his bravery, courage, and fighting ability, he has been decorated by the Armenian, Russian, and Bulgarian governments, and greatly respected and honored by the English government.

Next to him comes "the Lion of Daron," who, with his wife and two sons, fought for three days and nights against two hundred regular Turkish soldiers until all his ammunition gave out and he, with his two sons, was killed by the enemy.

After him we have Shaké, an Armenian heroine, who, after her husband was killed, and with her child in her arms, fought the Turkish soldiers from a mountain refuge until all her ammunition gave out. Fear of capture caused her to tie the babe to her body and throw herself down the precipice in order not to surrender to the enemy!

Another heroine is Miss Dikranian. Only a young girl, during the World War, when the Armenians were being deported from their homes for joining the Allies, she joined the Armenian volunteer army, and, single-handed, killed eighty Turkish soldiers. She is in America and I have seen her personally. She is now married and lives in the United States.

There are many other Armenian heroes and heroines, but unfortunately, I cannot devote more space to them in this little volume. These of whom I have told should give the reader an adequate idea of the heroism of so small a nation as one of 4,000,000 people.

CHAPTER XI

ARMENIAN RITES AND CEREMONIES

New Year's Eve

NEW YEAR'S EVE is the most desirable of evenings, so every Armenian boy will tell you, for it is a day of genuine good time for all the youngsters.

New Year's Eve is not celebrated in Armenia as it is in America. Each Armenian family celebrates New Year's Eve within the home. After supper, the fireplace is used and a fire kept burning until after midnight, so that, light being the sign of life, the family life may be continuous and bright. In the center of the room is put up a large table upon which are set dishes of raisins, nuts, and sweets (*basdegh, rojik*). The boys and girls eat what they can, and fill their pockets with what is left. While the celebration is going on, the neighbors, one at a time, lower

through the chimney a basket full of goodies. No one knows who is our Santa Claus. After dividing among us the contents of the basket, it is our turn to do the same thing to our neighbors, so that every family has its Santa Claus every New Year's Eve.

All this struck me very curiously. Many a time have I run to the roof of our house to see who it was that lowered the basket through the chimney; but, unfortunately, each time I was too late, as I found the end of the rope tied to the chimney, and that the person had disappeared. In fact, no one ever did catch our invisible and evasive Santa Claus.

Christmas

The Christmas ceremonies are more elaborate, and religiously regarded. All school-children and boys anxiously await Christmas because of the long vacation, and more especially on account of the carnivals that are held on the streets. On

holidays we used to go to a bear-wrestling match. The bear is muzzled, the man wrestling him in the open in the presence of a large crowd. The wrestler generally knows his tricks well, and is very careful that the bear doesn't give him a famous "bear-hug." Many wrestlers have suffered a broken back after a bear wrestle for not being careful. To wrestle a bear is dangerous sport; it takes a very strong and clever young man. In the face of all dangers, however, young Armenians still do wrestle him, and strange to say, I have seen men who have downed the bear in a single wrestle. The bear is always chained from his nostrils by a ring which is unhooked during the tussle. Sometimes the bear used to run wild and so cause a great deal of excitement among the crowd, besides alarming his master.

On Christmas morning all the Armenians go to church, and after dinner begin the customary visits and greetings of the season. Usually two of the members of

the family stay at home to receive the visitors while the others make the calls; then they change their turn so that, during the three days of greeting, all neighbors are able to visit each other. The visitor enters the house saying, "Greetings! Christ is born!" The host replies, "Greetings to the whole world!" Upon this, the visitor is received with respect, and entertained with refreshments.

We have no Christmas tree and do not exchange presents on Christmas day. Our Santa Claus comes on New Year's Eve instead of Christmas Eve, for Christmas is a sacred day and is passed with greetings and festivals of joy.

In the spring, we fast for forty days before Easter, during which time we strictly abstain from meat and fish.

On the evening preceding Easter morning, we break our fasts. It is a great day of feasting, and on this occasion we prepare elaborate meals. On Easter morning we go to church, and following an Easter

dinner, greetings are exchanged after the fashion of Christmas celebration. The visitor greets the host saying, "Christ has risen from the dead!" To which the host replies, "Blessed be the resurrection of Christ!" After the greetings are over, the people gather in an open place where wrestling and *djirit* games are held.

The great pastime on Easter day is "egg-fighting." There are hard-boiled-egg sellers in the amusement place. Two young men buy a dozen or more of these vari-colored eggs, place them in a row, squat on the ground, then each takes an egg from one end, with which they begin the fight. That one who holds in his hand the last unbroken egg wins and collects the entire dozen. I have seen men carry home a whole basketful of eggs in triumph.

On the Day of the Transfiguration of Christ our custom is to throw cold water on each other. We do this amid great laughter and joy. On this day people usually wear their old clothes. I have seen

many forgetful persons (wearing new clothes) thoroughly drenched. It is a very amusing picture to see young men dashing pails of water upon each other. On this day, also, we build bonfires, and dance around them. Many young men consider it great fun and a clever thing to jump over the bonfire, but through such daring there have been those who have fallen into the fire and been badly burned.

CHAPTER XII

COUNTRY AND CITY

The Country

THE Armenian countryside is beautiful indeed; peace and quietness reign here. And a visitor will find the Armenian farmer very hospitable; he will put out all his good things before his guest, insisting that he enjoy them and feel at home. His industry springs from a sincere love of the soil, a firm attachment to it. From early in the morning he works until after sunset, and his work, rough yet pleasant, is begun with a prayer. He ploughs the ground with oxen and a wooden plough, always singing or whistling the while. We have many songs of the plough, but I shall give only that one most characteristic of the spirit of the Armenian farmer:

PLOUGHING.
Following the Method used for Generations.

"Lo! the golden sun is risen,
Warm and clear is the day,
Plough, plough, lovely oxen,
Quickly plough the field
So that our neighbors do not say
Lazy are my oxen.

"When winter comes we shall have no fears;
Happily will pass our days;
Plenty shall be our provisions
Full and satisfied we shall be;
Plough, plough, deeply plough, my dear oxen."

The Armenian farmer thirsts for education, and each and every Armenian village or town, no matter how poor, has its own schoolhouse. The schoolmaster, although his pay is trivial, is nevertheless the most prominent person in the village; usually he has his own land upon which he works during his spare time, so as to supplement his income. The Armenian farmer is not only hospitable, industrious, and a lover of education, but, above all, he is religious. Every farming community

has its own church, and a very common sight is that of the priest, after morning services in the church, working in the field to earn part of his living and that of his family.

The farmer's wife is just as industrious, and works as hard as her husband. It is indeed a wholesome picture to see her churning the milk in a skin bag or wooden jug hung from a wooden tripod; her daughter sitting on a little stool, milking the cow, and her son bringing the cattle from the fields at dusk.

There is no farming machinery on our farms. Sowing, reaping, and all the rest is done by hand. Quite often, at harvest time, I have watched the farmer reap the wheat with his sickle and scythe, large drops of sweat rolling down his cheeks, the water-boy whisking the pail from reaper to reaper. It has always been a source of inspiration to me to watch the farmer work and sing in his fields.

Ours is a farmer who sows the seed by

hand from his apron. When the wheat is ripe, it is reaped by a hand sickle and made into trusses to be set upright in the field row by row. Dried bunches of wheat with the chaff are then spread upon dry ground, and the oxen drag over the grain a shaft, the bottom of which is covered with sharp flints. By this method, the farmer pulverizes the straw, which is later thrown up with a wooden shovel against the wind; the heavier grain falls to the ground by force of gravitation, and the lighter chaff is driven on a little farther by the wind. He repeats this process until all the grain is freed from the chaff. The chaff is saved to feed his cattle and horses, while the grain, after being washed and the stones and dirt removed by a sifter, is stored away in large underground wells and securely covered for the winter.

The Armenian shepherd is a very picturesque person, brave and care-free. He loves his herd, his big watch-dog, and his flute (*serink*) made of reed. At noon

this flute calls the herd to water, and in the evening it gathers them together and leads them home. While the herd is grazing, shepherds play for their own amusement. They are generally quite musical.

I was very fond of the flute, and often with my boy companions have I gone to the shepherd and asked him to play on his flute. A jolly good fellow, he would never refuse my request. Sometimes these shepherds would come to the city, and earn a few coins by playing the flute in the market-places, bazaars, and city squares. The Armenian shepherd lives out in the open in a little hut, leads a very simple life, and eats simple food. He is well known for longevity.

The City

Our cities differ greatly from American cities. Our streets are crooked and narrow, with narrow sidewalks made of cobblestones; on rainy days they are very muddy, and on other days very dusty. Al-

ARMENIAN SHEPHERD.
Alone, but Happy with his Flock.

most all the Armenian houses are built of sun-baked mud bricks, square in shape, flat-roofed, and usually do not rise above three stories in height. The houses are joined to each other or separated by a narrow lane, so that one can easily jump from housetop to housetop. Many a time, while flying a kite—they were especially convenient for this purpose—I have run a distance of two or three blocks over housetops. Because I used to fly kites and sing in the meantime, I was spoken of in the neighborhood as "the happiest boy" in our section.

In my home town, the streets had no signs, the houses no numbers. We had no electric illumination; the streets were dark and dangerous at night. On each street corner, attached to the house, was a kerosene lamp which offered a feeble and dim light at night. After sunset these lamps were lit by a lamplighter, who hurried from one corner to another with a ladder on his back and a torch in his hand.

We had three bazaars—the wheat bazaar, where they sold wheat, the vegetable bazaar, where they sold fruits and vegetables, and the merchandise bazaar, where they sold dry-goods. As I intimated in a previous chapter, different streets were assigned to different artisans; shoemakers were on one street, which was called "shoemakers' street," dry-goods merchants on another, and so on. There was no system of walking on the street; you could keep to the right or left just as you pleased, so that pedestrians were always getting in each other's way. You would think it a miracle if you saw how one finds his way out of this tangle. While walking on the street you will see a cab-driver, standing in his two-wheeled car driven by one horse, dashing down the street at breakneck speed, making his way through the mob crying, "Make way! Make way!" all the while keeping his horse whipped up.

Every Wednesday was bazaar day in my home town. If you should ever visit

my home town, Adana, on a bazaar day, you will be charmed at its picturesqueness. In the bazaar you will see perhaps a dozen heavily veiled women, squatting or sitting on little stools, selling sour milk (*madzoon*), or the pedlar, with a square board hung from his neck by a leather strap, selling stockings and handkerchiefs in all colors. In the thick of the crowd you will come upon the most interesting of figures—the burden-carrier (*hamal*)—with a hundred to five hundred pounds of merchandise or what-not on his back, and held by a hand-hook, as he advances slowly with firm steps, crying out, "Make way! Make way!" On account of the lack of other means of conveyance, these men carry goods from one place to another and for only a few pennies. They are the happiest men in town; no cares, no worries. They live from day to day, from hand to mouth.

It was always great fun for me, when I was about ten years old, to try to zigzag

through the mob without being bumped by hurrying pedestrians. I had done this so often that I soon became an expert, so that it was just as easy for me to walk zigzag fashion and find my way, as to walk in a straight line. Incidentally, it was very good football practice.

I remember in Adana hearing the cry of a man who sold *sahleb* for breakfast. *Sahleb* is a white, starchy, liquid food prepared from a root. His cries were followed by the calls of the man who sold *cheurek* (the Armenian doughnut). Later in the morning or in the afternoon came the cries of the pedlar who sold the merchandise on his back. He used to sing a song of praise about his goods, and he traveled from house to house. He was followed by the call of the wool-carder, who carried a large wooden bow on his back and a round-headed short club in his hand. Quite often have I called him into our yard to card the wool of our beddings. (Armenian families sun their bedding once a

week, and take out the wool, wash it, dry it, and have it carded twice a year.) The wool-carder places the tight string of the bow in the pile of the wool, holding the bow with his left hand, while with his right he strikes the club on the string. The vibration of the string cards the wool into the desired fine tufts.

We also had a "man with the bear" who traveled from street to street with a drum on his back and a bear with a ring in his nostril following behind, tied to a rope, the other end of which was in the hand of the master. This minstrel played his drum while boys and girls gathered round to watch the bear perform tricks and collect the coins. Sometimes this man cured colds, and he did it in this way: Placing a flat board on the ground, he asked the man with the cold (in his back or joints) to lie down flat on his stomach on the board. The "doctor" then pulled the bear over the prostrate figure, whereupon the bear stepped "lightly" or

"heavily," as his master directed, on the region affected. After the bear was through with this operation the man got up "feeling warm and fine"—cured of his cold!

Then we had a "snake-charmer" who appeared with a horn and a bag of snakes hung from his left side. When we heard his weird-sounding horn, we knew that the snake-charmer was in the street, and soon a circle formed around him. He took all kinds of snakes out of his bag, wrapped them around his neck, or covered his breast with them. Sometimes he would make one of the snakes bite his thumb until it bled; this demonstrated to us that he was immune against snake bites. He would promise to make immune against snake bites in a like manner any one who wished it. While the snake was biting your finger, he would recite a prayer, and after you had bled, he would sprinkle a white powder on your thumb, and wrap it up in a cloth, and presto! you

were "immune," and allowed to take his snakes in your hands or wrap them around your neck as much as you liked. Of course the poisonous fangs of all these snakes had been carefully removed.

Dogs in Adana have no home; they run loose in the street, and hang around the butcher-shops to feed. In the evening they sleep in open places. Each neighborhood has its own dogs, and the dogs of one neighborhood would chase away the dogs of another neighborhood. In the spring-time one would see packs of dogs make for the vineyard to eat grapes. Many times have I seen these animals return from the vineyards, while others passed them on their way to enjoy the sweet produce of our vineyards.

CHAPTER XIII

ARMENIA

ARMENIA is a familiar word to Americans, but not so its location. I have come in contact with many American boys and even mature persons who did not know where Armenia was; hence I do not think it superfluous—rather illuminating—to give here the location and boundaries of my native land.

Armenia is a table-land in Asia Minor, about six thousand feet above sea level. On the north, it is bound by the Caucasian Mountains; on the east, by the Caspian Sea; on the south, it embraces northern Mesopotamia; on the west, it borders the southern end of the Black Sea and, with a gentle curve, descends southward to the Mediterranean Sea. Its area in round numbers is about 150,000 square miles.

Armenia is the most beautiful country in the world; perhaps it was for this reason that God selected this land for His Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve, our first ancestors, made their original abode. Armenia is called "the cradle of the human race," or "the land of man's origin," meaning that God first created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, from where their children multiplied and spread throughout the world. Mount Ararat, upon which Noah's Ark rested after the great deluge, is also in Armenia. Mount Ararat, with its robe of clouds and crown of a diadem of snow dazzling in the bright rays of the sun, is the monarch of all the surrounding mountains. The colors of her majestic aspect change with each changing light of the day, and fill the hearts of poets and artists with unbounded joy and inspiration.

Furthermore, if the reader will open his Bible and read (Genesis 2: 10, 11), he

will see the names of four rivers, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Phrat, all of which have their origin in Armenia. The last two rivers, Phrat and Hiddekel, have been conclusively identified with the rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, which have their origin in the mountains of Upper Armenia. To this proof I am going to add my humble opinion, and ask if the third river, Gihon, mentioned in Genesis 2: 10, 11, cannot be identified with the River Sihoom, which runs through my home town, Adana, Cilicia in Lesser Armenia.

If you take a journey through Armenia, a majestic panorama of nature will unfold before your eyes: fertile valleys and beautiful hills, fruitful plains, green pasture lands, lovely gardens and vineyards, shimmering lakes and snow-capped, lofty mountains—in brief, a charming and peaceful landscape absorbs your imagination. You become entranced and will say, "Lo, this is truly the Garden of Eden!"

No traveler, who has ever seen Ararat,

has failed to speak of the reaction to its unsurpassing beauty, magnificence, and grandeur. We Armenians know it as "Mother Ararad," because, for centuries, it has been our home, and again, because it contains the sources of all great rivers, especially those of the Euphrates and Tigris, which enclose within them a fertile valley, where the first agrarian civilization began.

Let me give my reader the following description by an English traveler, who came to Armenia and observed Mount Ararat with his own eyes: "The impression made by Ararat upon the mind of every one who has any sensibility of the stupendous works of the creator is wonderful and overpowering. Many a traveler of genius and taste has employed both the power of the pen and the pencil in attempting to portray this impression, but the consciousness that no description, no representation can reach the supremacy of the object thus attempted to be depicted

must prove to the candid mind that, whether we address the ear or eye, it is difficult to avoid the poetic in expression and the exaggerated in form and confine ourselves strictly within the bounds of consistency and truth.

"Nothing can be more beautiful than its shape, nothing more awful than its height. All the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared to it. It is perfect in all its parts; no hard, rugged features, no unnatural prominence; everything is in harmony, and all combined to render it one of the sublimest objects in nature."

The height of Mount Ararat is 17,000 feet above sea level, and it can be seen with the naked eye from a distance of 145 to 155 miles. At a little distance from it stands Little Ararat, which is likewise beautiful and impressive.

The lakes of Armenia are a bit of magic, spread as they are throughout the country like jewels. The loveliest in Ar-

menia is Lake Van, a vision surpassing all other lakes in beauty and splendor. It is situated 5,000 feet above sea level, embosomed in the center of a verdant and rich plain, which in turn is girdled by an extraordinary, romantic, and undulating mountain chain. Lake Van is always enchanting Armenian poets and artists as well as the foreign travelers.

The climate of Armenia is very healthful, and conducive to longevity. The winter, cold and severe, lasts from the middle of October until the beginning of May. The air is dry, pure, and agreeable throughout the whole year.

Besides its physical beauty, Armenia is rich in natural resources—oil, gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, coal, et cetera. God created all these things for man's use, but unfortunately, the Turkish government is ignorant, lacking in enterprise, and unmindful of the country's welfare, because of which neglect all these treasures of the soil are going to waste.

In Argheni Maden there is a copper mine where the copper runs to waste in solution. In 1920, when there was talk of America taking the mandate for Armenia, General Harbard went there to make a survey of the country. During his visit, he came upon the copper mines of Argheni Maden (a little distance away from my native city, Palou). His engineer dipped a bunch of iron keys into the running copper solution, held them there for a moment; then taking them out again, he saw that all the keys were coated red with copper. This engineer figured that above three hundred dollars' worth of copper in solution was going to waste every minute, day and night. For centuries this has continued, and is continuing to-day.

There are places in Armenia where you could find traces of silver, gold, and coal, if you took pains to dig a few inches under the ground; but the Turkish government shows no interest whatever, and all this ore is going to waste. There is a saying

in the Bible: "Neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you."

No one is allowed to dig mines and utilize their resources. Any one attempting it is severely punished by the Turkish government. The following is a true incident, which will serve as a good example to illustrate my point:

An Armenian friend told me that his father was once traveling with a companion in Armenia from his home town to another town. On their way, being thirsty, they noticed a shining lake a little distance away; thinking that they had found water, they hurried towards it. My friend's father dipped his cup into the lake, and as he brought the full cup to his lips, what do you think he found it contained? Oil! Although disappointed, and still thirsty, he hurried with a cupful of the oil to the Turkish government, telling them of the discovery. Did the Turkish government give him a reward? No, but

they gave him three months in jail, and whipped his companion for being an accomplice.

That is what happens to any one desiring to be of service to these terrible, ignorant Turks.

I shall speak in the following pages of our history. A separate volume would be required to give the long chains of Armenian dynasties. I shall, however, give my reader a brief survey of Armenian history which I think will be interesting and instructive.

In language and history, the Armenians call themselves *Haïk* or *Hayer,* and their country *Hayasdan.* They take this name from the first great founder of the Armenian nation, Haïg, who fought against Belus, King of Assyria in 1277 B. C., and killed him in battle. The story runs as follows:

Belus, King of Assyria, sent word to Haïg, who was residing in the north, to come and live with him under his roof.

Upon Haïg's refusal, Belus gathered all his forces and formed a great army, marching north to fight and subdue him. But Haïg also got busy and organized all his relatives, about three hundred in number, then went forward to meet Belus halfway. In the battlefield, Haïg set his men in the shape of a wedge, while he, himself, stood at the foremost point. Belus, thinking Haïg to be alone, advanced upon him unaccompanied. When he was but a short distance away from Haïg, he fell down pierced through by one of Haïg's arrows. Upon the death of their leader, the Assyrian army retreated in tumult and disorder. Then Haïg, opening the two arms of the wedge, enveloped the Assyrians, and chased them to their boundaries, soundly beaten. This, then, is the tradition in history that moved the Armenians into calling themselves Haïk.

According to other writers, Armenians take their names from their brave and wise Armenian king, Armenag. Furthermore,

Bishop Toorian, a very learned man, says that Armenians take their names from the region where they lived for centuries. This region is found between the mountains of Ararat and Meni.

Whatever may be the origin of the name Armenian, however, it remains a historical fact that Armenians have lived in Armenia for over 2,500 years, under rule of many kings and dynasties. There was a time in history (46 B. C.) when Armenians, under their most famous king, Dikran, who is called "the King of Kings," conquered the whole of Asia Minor, but, unfortunately, being forced to fight with the Persians in the north, the Arabs in the south, and especially the Romans in the west, he was unable to keep his kingdom intact. After him, various kingdoms sprang into existence, and we have been able to keep Cilicia, or Lesser Armenia, which was lost to the Arabs in 1273 A. D. The last king of Armenia, Leon VI, died in Paris.

During the entire period of our history, our country has stood on the cross-roads of civilization; Armenians have fought against the Persians, the Assyrians, the Arabs, the Tartars, the Greeks, and the Romans. Before the fall of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, while the Armenians were fighting the Arabs, there came the great onslaught of the Turkish nomadic hordes from Turkestan, before whose sword and fire everything withered and vanished. Since the fifteenth century, Armenia has been divided among the Persians, Turks, and Russians, and Armenians have lived under the rule of these three governments. During this period, Armenians have waged bitter fights and struggles to regain their freedom and independence, to establish their old and glorious kingdom. Bitter has been the struggle, and still more bitter their disappointment and disillusionment.

Before the War there were Armenian cities in Turkish Armenia which did not

recognize the Turkish authority, did not pay taxes, and lived an independent life by themselves. The name *Zeytoon,* a mountainous village in Cilicia, shall remain immortal in the annals of Armenian history for its bravery, courage, and valor.

As much admiration may be given Adana, Sis, Moosh, Hadjin, and Sasoun.

In 1919, after the armistice, having been disappointed by the Allies, the Armenians took possession of a portion of Armenia in the Caucasus. To-day Armenians have an independent republic, 25,000 kilometers in area. Since 1920 Armenians have built many schools and a university. They have irrigated the land, drained the swamps, ploughed the fields, built canals and dams, and increased the agricultural product of the country in such manner as to invite the envy of all neighboring countries.

We began anew at the foot of Mount Ararat. Let us hope that we can keep our country intact and well protected against the enemy!

THE "LION OF DARON."
With his Two Sons (The "Cubs.")

CHAPTER XIV

THE ARMENIAN RACE, LANGUAGE, AND RELIGION

SINCE my arrival in the United States, I have come in contact with many, not only schoolboys, but mature, and even educated persons who did not know who the Armenians were, or to what racial stock of mankind they belonged. The United States of America being the most cosmopolitan country in the world, it is both advisable and helpful to know every people living in this country. The following pages will, I hope, throw a sufficient light upon this question, and equip the reader with the necessary knowledge about Armenians as a race.

The fact that Armenia is geographically located in Asia Minor has given rise, in the minds of some people, to the wrong impression that the Armenians are an

Asiatic people. Many Americans have considered the Armenians identical with the Greeks, Persians, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Syrians, and Jews; still others have thought of the Armenians as "Christianized Turks." What an appalling ignorance!

Armenians are none of these. They differ from them all in race, language, religion, and racial characteristics. The reader will ask, then, "Who are the Armenians?"

In answer to this question I will state that the testimony of the world's greatest historians, philologists, and anthropologists has proved scientifically, beyond any question or doubt, that the Armenians belong to the Aryan race, which is divided into three branches: (1) the Nordic, (2) the Alpine, (3) the Mediterranean. Armenians belong to the Denarian family of the Alpine branch. The original home of the Alpine branch of the white race is Central Europe. Of the three branches

of the Aryan race, according to the best anthropologists, the Alpine type has been the most adventurous, the most warlike, and the most conquering; this type has contributed more to existing civilization than the other two branches.

Armenians, let it be repeated for emphasis, belong to the same racial stock as the English, the French, and the Germans. Just as the white man supplanted the Indians in America, so the Armenians, centuries before the Christian era, migrated from eastern Europe into Asia Minor in search of better location, and established themselves in and around the region of Mount Ararat, where they built the kingdom of Armenia, and have been living for over two thousand five hundred years.

We call ourselves Haïk, and our country Hayasdan. Armenian is still another name for our people. There are many conjectures about the name "Armenian," as I have said. The most plausible eth-

nological statement is that our people took the name Armenian from the region where they lived—a region found between the mountains of Ararat and Meni. Whatever may be the origin of this name, the important fact for the reader to bear in mind is that we call ourselves Haïk, our country Hayasdan, and our language Hayeren, that we belong to the Aryan race, and are *not* Asiatics.

Armenian Language

The Armenian language, too, in the opinion of world-famous philologists, is Indo-European in origin. Our alphabet has thirty-six characters; any foreign word can be spelled in Armenian without the need of putting two letters together in order to give the exact sound. Every letter in an Armenian word is pronounced; there are no superfluous letters in any word. Each letter has its own peculiar sound, and unlike English, for example, one letter has a different sound in different

places. Our alphabet has three b's, three c's, and three d's and two e's, with soft, medium, and hard sounds, besides extra consonants which are not found in the English language.

The characters of our alphabet do not look like those of other alphabets; some characters are borrowed from Greek and Assyrian alphabets, and the rest are original. Many English, German, French, and American people have learned the Armenian language. Lord Byron, the great English poet, learned the Armenian language, and was very fond of it; he mastered our language well enough so that he wrote an Armenian grammar, and translated Armenian books into English.

Literature

We have our own distinctive literature; beautiful ballads, epic and lyric poetry; descriptive, expository, narrative prose, and drama. Our old manuscripts are rich with ancient treasures of thought.

Art

We have had many famous painters and sculptors. Recent excavations in Armenia have brought to light a rich store of Armenian architecture which has excited the admiration of European artists.

Religion

Armenians were the first people to embrace Christianity. They became Christians in the year 301 A. D. They were the first people to make the Christian church a state church, which example was followed by Constantine the Great of the Byzantine Empire.

The following statement, which I took from the *Boston Traveler,* will throw more light upon this matter:

May Prove Armenians First to Adopt Christianity

Moscow, April 9 (1925).—(By the Associated Press).—Archæological dis-

coveries of great importance, which it is declared may prove that the Armenians were the first people officially to adopt Christianity, are reported from Erivan, Russian Armenia, by the head of the American Near East relief mission to that city.

At a village called Dovin, on the slopes of Mt. Ararat, there has been found the head of a life-size statue of an Armenian king, bearing a crown and earrings with the sign of the cross. These are pointed to as indicating that the king was a Christian.

Our mother church is called "the Armenian Apostolic Church," in honor of its founders, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, the two apostles of Christ, who first came to Armenia to preach Christianity in 54 A. D. The Armenian Apostolic Church is different from the Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic Churches. The nearest church to it is the Episcopalian Church of England. Later on, however, in the fourteenth century, the Dominican Fathers, and in the seventeenth century, the Jesuits,

introduced Catholicism; and in 1831 Protestantism was introduced into Armenia by the American missionaries. To-day we have three separate churches: The Catholic Church, under the authority of the Pope of Rome, the Protestant Church, under the leadership of the American Missionary Board, and the Armenian Apostolic Church, under the guardianship of the Armenian Catholicos at Etchmiadzin, in Greater Armenia.

Before the world war, there were about 150,000 Armenian Protestants, about the same number of Catholics, while the great bulk of the people still adhered to their own church.

The Racial Question in America

Recently a prominent government official in Portland, Oregon, caused a great deal of trouble for himself by calling a leading Armenian rug-dealer in that city "Asiatic," and attempted to deny him the right of citizenship. The Ar-

menian brought suit against this American gentleman, and the case was brought in court for decision. The question took on greater dimensions, and centered upon the point whether Armenians were European or Asiatic.

In the court were a German anthropologist, and Professor Dixon of Harvard, and Professor Boas of Columbia University, two of the greatest anthropologists in America. These three professors, as well as others in the court, testified in behalf of the Armenians, and proved the fact, based upon scientific evidence, that Armenians, although living in Asia Minor, are *white* by blood, and belong to the Alpine branch of the Aryan race. The German anthropologist openly stated in court that he would gladly give his daughter, if he had one, in marriage to an Armenian, and *vice versa*. After a long discussion, the United States Court learned from Professors Dixon and Boas that Armenians belonged to the Aryan race, and were eligible to citi-

zenship. Being at last thoroughly convinced of the fact, the court dismissed the case.

Below I give a clipping from the *Boston Post* of July 29, 1925, which is the final ruling of the court on this question:

A Sensible Ruling

By ruling that Armenians are eligible to naturalization in the United States, Federal Judge Wolverton, of Portland, Oregon, unites common sense with an understanding knowledge of the racial history of these people.

The government held that the Armenians were not eligible to become citizens because they were Asiatics. In a strictly geographical sense they are, but technically they are not. They are a very old branch of the Aryan stock and are related to the "Alpine" stock in Europe. They have been Christians since 285 A. D. They have maintained their racial, social and religious solidarity during all the centuries since. And they are whites.

Some of our finest citizens and merchants are Armenians. To refuse such

men the right of citizenship seems ill-advised and unjust. We hope and believe that the government will lose its appeal to the Supreme Court.

Armenians, although of darker complexion than Americans, are white by race. Their dark complexion is due to climatic conditions, and the influence of the country where they live. In Armenia, you may see many blond people with fair skin and blue eyes. As a matter of fact, my father had blond hair, brown eyes, and a very fair complexion. Armenians feel themselves akin to Europeans; in Europe as well as in America they are easily assimilated with the white race; they go to American churches, marry Americans (there are many Americans who have married Armenian girls), and feel at home with the Americans. Incidentally, it was an Armenian, named Dr. Seropian, who invented the fast-green color which you see on the American paper dollar, and the first American soldier to land in

Manila during the Spanish-American war was also an Armenian.

Given equal freedom and privileges, Armenians would prove worthy rivals of any nation in the world, in industry as well as intellectual activity. They command all the intelligence, energy, and virtues of the best European stock, because they are a branch of the same root. Lord Cromwell called the Armenians "the intellectual cream of the East;" others have called them "the Anglo-Saxons of the East," and still others "the Frenchmen of the East."

Armenians have for centuries been the standard-bearers and guardians of the civilization of the West against the uncouth Asiatic barbarians; it is for this reason that Gladstone said, "To serve Armenia is to serve civilization!" But alas! his words fell on barren ground, and his voice, like a resonant echo, died in the tumult of self-seeking interests of great European nations.

A Girl Soldier.
Miss Dikranian, the "One-Woman Army."

CHAPTER XV

MY COMING TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

After four years of monastic education, I revolted against the secluded and sedentary life I was leading. My blood surged within my veins; I longed for adventure, and I decided to get out into the world.

One day, soon after my decision, I went to see the abbot of the monastery. While in his presence, I told him frankly that I did not care to stay in the monastery any longer, that I was going into the world to seek my fortune.

Upon these words, he looked at me in surprise and said, "My boy, we are getting old, and soon we must depart from this world. It is your duty to stay here and take our places in order to guard the old manuscripts and serve the church.

You are young and inexperienced; you do not know the world. How do you dare go out into it alone? You will be sorry if you leave. This much I have to say."

His advice was well-meant and practical, but I had decided, and could not be deterred from my decision. Seeing this, he gave me his permission, and blessed me. Whereupon I kissed his hand, bowed, and left.

Hardly a week had passed, when in the clear dawn of a May morning I packed up my belongings and left the monastery on a caravan. I wept over the farewells. It was very hard for me to leave the monastery; I had grown so accustomed to it.

In one day by caravan, we reached Adana, my home town. Here I stayed with my relatives for a week, then left for Europe from Mersin. Being born in an inland country, and for the first time seeing the ocean, I was greatly amazed at its vastness. When I first entered a small

boat which carried us to the steamer, I had a queer sensation; I thought the whole earth was shaking beneath my feet; the boat was paddled by six men, who wore garments of much color.

Our steamer first touched at Smyrna, the birthplace of Homer. Smyrna is built on a hill, very beautiful at night when all the houses are lighted. From Smyrna I went to Constantinople, where I changed my mind, and decided instead of going to Europe, I wanted to see Egypt first. So I took another boat to Egypt, which steamer landed at Alexandria. Fascinating Egypt, about which I had read so much! Picturesque Arabs with bare feet in scanty though colorful clothing!

During my stay in Alexandria, I met a young man from my home town, Adana. You can well imagine how delighted we both were to see each other in a foreign land. This young man, who was older than I, coaxed me into joining him; he was on his way to the United States.

Being adventurous, I agreed with him at once. Three days later, as I was reading a book in the garden of an Armenian church, my friend came to me in haste and told me to buy my ticket to New York. I closed my book and hastened to the ticket office, then ran to the steamer.

At the dock I waited and waited for this young man, but he did not appear. The steamer whistle blew its farewell. I was in an agony of perplexity and embarrassment. Should I take the boat alone or wait for my friend? Soon, however, I made up my mind and got on the steamer; as soon as I arrived, the gangplank was pulled up. I leaned against the steamer rail still hoping and waiting for my friend to appear. Suddenly I saw him running towards the steamer shaking his hands in the air. Seeing that the plank was already pulled up and the steamer ready to leave, he hastily wrote on a scrap of paper his cousin's address—a rug-merchant in New York City—and firmly

wrapped it round a piece of stone, then threw it to me into the boat. Unfortunately, the stone did not travel far enough and fell into the ocean, together with the address; and his second attempt found our steamer already moving off. He shouted in a loud voice that he would join me in New York City with the arrival of the next boat, and that he was very sorry for this unfortunate incident.

The steamer was now ploughing its way through the Mediterranean Sea, traveling farther and faster every minute, until soon my friend and the shore of Egypt had rolled away and disappeared from view. Now I began looking around to see if I could find any one I knew. In vain! Some people were sitting in steamer-chairs on deck, while others were walking and talking—they were all strangers to me. I walked to the forward deck of the ship and leaning on the farthermost end, I watched the huge, red, glorious sun of the Egyptian skies sink into the immensity

of the sea. Such a beautiful sunset! I was completely absorbed, forgetting everything around me.

But soon I came to myself, and the thought came that I was going to a strange country where I did not know anybody. I decided to face all dangers and obstacles with as much coolness and common sense as I could muster. Engaged in these thoughts, I began to walk back on deck. As I was passing by people sitting in chairs, I saw a gray-haired woman lying in one of the steamer chairs with her eyes closed; she was murmuring, "Somebody, please, give me a glass of water." I knew she was sea-sick. I picked up the glass next to her chair and brought her water. After she drained the tumbler she opened her eyes and said, "Thank you, God bless you, my boy. Who are you? Where are you going? Where are your parents?"

I told her my story, and after she heard it, she said, "Sit in this chair by my side,

my boy; from now on you are my son. You will be under my protection; I will see that you arrive in America safely. See, I have enough money," and she began pulling out some French bank-notes and Egyptian securities from the inside pocket of her jacket, and then jingled her belt so I could hear the English pounds sterling in gold. I sat by her side in the chair, and soon after became acquainted with other Armenians who were going to the United States, and who praised my courage and determination.

From Alexandria, Egypt, I arrived in Naples, Italy. From this beautiful city, I saw the gray smoke of Vesuvius, the famous volcanic mountain of Italy, and the lovely village skirting the side of the Adriatic shining under the bright sun of Italy. After a week's stay in Italy, we started for the States.

On the way to America, our steamer passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, where I saw the fortifications and stately

rocks of Gibraltar, majestically rising out of the ocean at the junction of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea.

We were not three days from New York when I saw a slender stream of water rising against the sky in the middle of the ocean.

"What is this strange phenomenon?" I asked one of my friends.

"That is a whale, emptying water from his mouth by shooting it out through the upper opening of his head."

"How strange," I said to myself.

This was something new to me, and I was very anxious to see the whale. The man assured me that we would see one soon. This was true, for after a little while I saw this huge mammal approaching our ship. I was told that a big whale could turn a ship over.

Soon we were upon it, a huge, black sea monster with large, wide mouth and small eyes, gracefully rolling in the ocean now on his head, now on his sides, never

launching his entire body in full sight. He came nearer and nearer. My friend dispersed my fears by telling me that we were protected by a sharp-edged strip of metal which ran along the keel of the boat. I began to observe the whale more carefully, intensely interested in all his motions. It was a strange sight; I can never forget it.

After the whale disappeared into the depths of the ocean, I went to the bow of the ship and looked down into the sea. I saw many swordfish that had been racing with our ship for hours; when they tire, they disappear. I was told that some of them would race with the ship until they became exhausted and died.

Two days later, early in the morning, just before daybreak, we arrived in New York. First, I saw the lights of New York shining brightly in the summer's clear sky. I said to myself over and over, "We are in the New World discovered by Columbus in 1492! Will it be an en-

tirely different land in all its aspects from the old world I have left behind?"

With the first lights of daybreak, I saw the outlines of the Statue of Liberty take form, becoming clearer and clearer as the night gave way to day, and then before us stood this goddess of America with a torch in her hands—a most impressive sight. My pulse began to beat faster, and my heart was filled with an inarticulate hope. I was in a new world; new and strange things was I going to see!

After breakfast, tugboats began to plough the New York harbor towards our steamer to carry our passengers to Ellis Island. When the boats neared our steamer, I saw a large, tall, and good-looking American standing on the deck, crying out in a loud voice, "All right!" These were the first English words I heard when I arrived in America. I was familiar with them, hence did not feel myself quite so much a stranger.

My first impressions of America left me

very excited. Soon I passed the required examination at Ellis Island and had landed in New York safely. The first thing that attracted my attention was the hurry and hustle of the people, the quick, nervous activity of the workers at the railroad station, the noise and turmoil of the multitude. All this took me by great surprise!

Being booked to Boston, we took our train to that city. But scarcely a month had passed before I began to long for the quiet and restful atmosphere of my native country, and I had about decided to buy a ticket and return to the old country when I met an Armenian doctor who, upon hearing my story, counselled me to stay. "My boy, you are vigorous, lively, and ambitious. This is the right place for you. You will regret leaving the United States. Stay here; you will soon get used to the place; besides, you can receive the best of education right here."

He took me with him on a street-car to

his home. While we were passing through Cambridge, he pointed out Harvard College and said:

"Do you see those red-brick buildings? They belong to Harvard University. Great men have come out of that institution."

His remarks filled me with pride, and a desire to stay, and I determined to conquer in remaining.

I am glad to be here. I have become a citizen, determined to make my home in this land.

God save our country—the great, glorious United States of America!

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